

The New Google

EXPOSED

How it will grab even MORE of your private data p38

- Every car journey you make
- Personalised adverts you can't avoid
- What you do in your own home
- All your phone calls...

...and even your DNA p38



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FLASH IS DEAD
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Has the new Google gone too far?

If you type Google into the search engine's own search box, the auto-complete function will tell you that "Google is God", and also "Skynet" (from the *Terminator* series) and "your friend", which is reassuring for anyone who wants to be pals with a megalomaniac artificial-intelligence system. It's certainly unpredictable. From broadband balloons on the edge of space to self-driving cars, Google is always dreaming up new concepts to make the world a better place, and all it asks for in return is your data – and lots of it.

As we explain in this issue's cover feature,

many of Google's latest projects involve new ways of gathering data, often in an intrusive, almost creepy way that suggests Google really is 'playing God'. Turn to page 38 to learn how worried you should be.

If privacy is your biggest concern when using Google products, on page 44 we compare the best tools for blocking trackers and other pests online. Our favourite wins by more than a nose!

Robert Irvine
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
[#webuser](#)



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Practical WebUser

Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

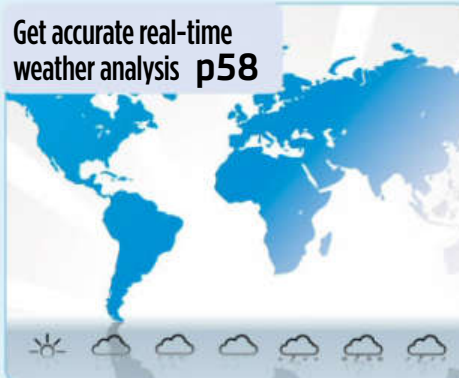
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What's New Online

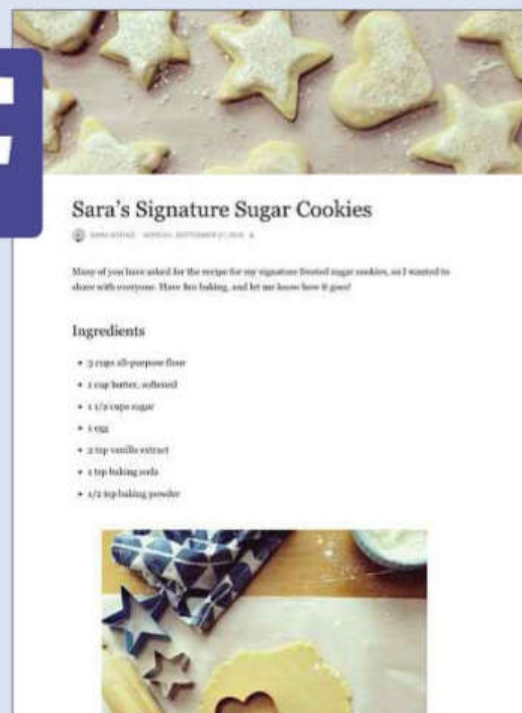
Write a blog using relaunched Facebook Notes

Do you remember Facebook Notes? It was a fairly popular tool in Facebook's early days, giving people the chance to write longer posts, but it has been largely forgotten since, and hasn't been updated since 2010. You can see when your friends last wrote a note at www.facebook.com/notes or search for 'notes' on the mobile app. Don't be surprised, though, if they've left it untouched for several years.

Facebook hopes to revive Notes by adding features that effectively turn it into a blogging platform, making posts more "beautiful and customisable". You can now add a main image to a post, and caption and resize photos within it. New text-formatting tools let you structure

your post into headers, quotes and bullet-points, as illustrated on Facebook's mouthwatering example ('Sara's Signature Sugar Cookies', see image on the right).

Serious bloggers will find that it lacks many sophisticated tools found on more advanced services, and you can write notes only on the web version of Facebook, not through the app (though you can read them on the latter). But it's ideal for any Facebook devotee who wants to say something more profound than who they voted for in *Strictly Come Dancing*. bit.ly/notes381



Safely land Elon Musk's rocket

bit.ly/spacex381

This game proves just how hard it is to land a space rocket on a platform that's floating on water. It's something web entrepreneur Elon Musk has been attempting since July 2014. The PayPal co-founder wants his company SpaceX (www.spacex.com) to help NASA build a colony on Mars, where water had just been discovered as we went to press. To make this affordable, SpaceX needs to reuse its Falcon 9 rockets, which means landing them safely after launch on an unmanned boat in the Atlantic. But three tests in the past

15 months have ended in failure (the last explosively so: bit.ly/falcon381). Show Musk how it's done by controlling the rocket's velocity and thrust.



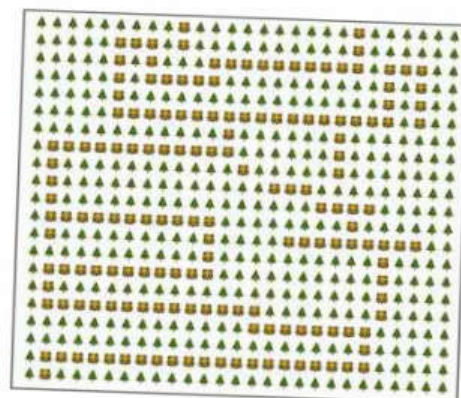
Play Chrome-crashing game

github.com/szhu/3030

In the game on the left, you have to stop a rocket crashing, but this game, called 3030, asks you to stop Chrome crashing. It highlights an interesting flaw in the browser, identified by

Latvian security researcher Andris Atteka (bit.ly/atteka381). Typing `http://a/%30%30` into Chrome's address bar in Chrome causes it to crash because it can't recognise the characters '%30%30'. At the time of writing, Google hadn't fixed the glitch, though it isn't a security risk.

The game turns the flaw into a challenge reminiscent of the 'buzz wire' toy. You need to guide your cursor over the bears, while avoiding the trees under which the game's developer has hidden the '%30%30' code (see this by right-clicking on the web page then clicking 'View page source'). Hitting a tree causes Chrome to crash, so make sure you have only one tab open while playing!



We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

Add 300,000 bunnies to your PC

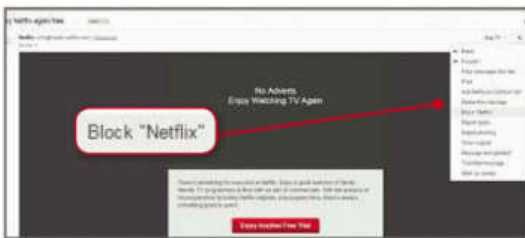
bit.ly/bunny381

It's unlikely we'll ever grow tired of Chrome Experiments, especially when they are as gloriously absurd as Bunny Sprites. With every mouse click, more rabbits appear on your screen, bouncing around like someone has spiked their carrot juice with Red Bull. Click enough times and you'll get 300,000 bunnies on



your screen. It's as satisfying as it is pointless.

Block senders in Gmail – for good



bit.ly/gmail381

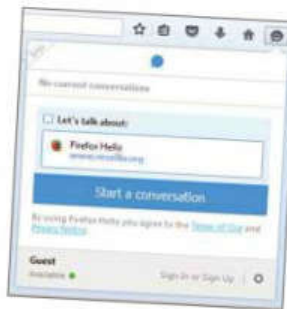
Gmail has made it a lot easier to block emails from specific email addresses. In the online version of Gmail, open the offending email, click the 'Reply' arrow, then click 'Block...' (see screen grab). In the Gmail Android app, tap the three vertical dots in the top-right corner, then tap 'Block...'.

All emails from this address will be sent to the spam folder. Unblocking the emails is just as easy, should you change your mind. Also new in the Android app is an 'unsubscribe' option that lets you block newsletters you no longer want to read.

Use instant messaging within Firefox

bit.ly/fox381

The timing was almost perfect. A day after Skype was down for millions of people worldwide (21 September), Mozilla added a key feature to its rival video-calling service, Firefox Hello (bit.ly/hello381): instant messaging. So now, as you chat to someone on video in Firefox 41 – the latest version of the browser – you can also send them messages. This is useful if, for example, you want to send them a URL to click. Launch instant-messaging by clicking the smiley-face emoticon.



5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

[@PoppyLegion](https://twitter.com/PoppyLegion)

News on this year's poppy appeal and info on how to volunteer

[@Surface](https://twitter.com/Surface)

Microsoft's account for new Surface products, cheesy adverts included

[@bodleianlibs](https://twitter.com/bodleianlibs)

Details of events at Oxford's Bodleian Libraries, including exhibits from the collection

[@PCSpecialist](https://twitter.com/PCSpecialist)

Lively chat from the PC manufacturers, whose Evora computer won our Windows 10 Group Test (Issue 380)

[@tonyblackburn](https://twitter.com/tonyblackburn)

Corny jokes from the radio legend, plus views on iOS 9, TV and music

+ Add sites to Opera's home screen

bit.ly/opera381

Opera's Android browser now lets you add website shortcuts to your home screen. When you're on a site, tap the plus sign left of the address bar, then tap 'Add to home screen'.

Latest Google voice search

bit.ly/voice381

It's now "blazingly fast" to search with your voice in Google's Android and iOS app. The firm's 'Speech Team' say in a blog post (link above) that the app is also more accurate, "especially in noisy environments".

See Pluto in colour

bit.ly/colour381

As we saw in Issue 380 (bit.ly/pluto380), NASA's New Horizons craft is taking stunning photos of Pluto. The latest include "enhanced colour" photos, from which the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has created a high-definition zoomable map.

Walk with elephants in Street View

bit.ly/elephants381

Google's first Street View imagery of Kenya focuses on the country's wildlife, most notably the Samburu National Reserve, home to the charity Save the Elephants (savetheelephants.org).

You'll see some of the 600 elephants that call it home, as well as lions and leopards. The Philippines



has also made its Street View debut: bit.ly/phil381.

Need to Know

NHS-approved health apps are 'leaking personal data'

What happened?

Phone and tablet apps that have been accredited by the NHS have been leaking data, which could leave users open to fraud.

The NHS vets many health apps, such as those designed to help you lose weight or stop smoking, to make sure that the software meets clinical-safety as well as data-protection standards. Researchers from Imperial College London revealed that many of the apps failed to meet the latter criteria, and found 70 of the 79 vetted apps they checked didn't do a good job of protecting user data.

A third of the apps sent personal data over the web without encrypting it first, leaving users vulnerable to eavesdropping, and half didn't have a privacy policy. The data the apps were potentially leaking mostly concerned the user's identity, although a few also collected more sensitive health data.

The results are alarming because healthcare organisations, the NHS included, are increasingly using technology to help improve support for patients. Apps are seen as one way to improve health, particularly with regard to weight and physical activity, but they can also be used to track more serious illnesses.

Security aside, some of the apps also fell down on the clinical element. One



app for calculating insulin doses didn't validate the accuracy of data, and was at risk of recommending the wrong amounts.

The report said that app quality was no better in the NHS library than in the more general app stores, such as Google Play. The NHS said it has started testing a "more thorough NHS endorsement model for apps", and that the leakiest apps have been removed from the library.

How will it affect you?

If you've downloaded a recommended app from the NHS Health Apps Library, you may want to check if it's still listed on the site; it could be one that was removed for leaking personal data.

However, there's no evidence that any of the apps have been targeted by criminals (although, thanks to the media coverage, that may now be more likely to happen), and they may be no riskier than any other app downloaded from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store, because most apps fail to do a great job of protecting your identity.

If you're using an app to manage your own illness, it's worth understanding exactly how it works and what its weaknesses are, so you don't put your health at risk. Try using apps in a complementary, rather than alternative, capacity, to sit alongside your existing management or dosage techniques, rather than relying

on an app exclusively.

The main concern with the NHS library is that its apps are supposed to be held to a higher data-protection standard than regular apps, because the info collected is potentially more sensitive. While a weight-loss app leaking your name and weight may be merely embarrassing, as the NHS increases its use of apps, future leaks could include data about more sensitive illnesses or disorders.

What do we think?

It's difficult to understand why the NHS would offer to vet apps and then not do the job properly. It clearly has the expertise across the organisation to check that a weight-loss app is giving safe advice, or that the latest clinical research is included in a stop-smoking aid, but the healthcare body needs top-end security experts to check data protection.

Apps have huge potential to help people manage their illnesses – not just for losing weight, but in helping diabetics more accurately track their insulin levels, for example. That's less expensive than frequent trips to the doctor's surgery, less of a burden than keeping track with paper and pen, and potentially more accurate.

But many patients will avoid using these tools – especially for sensitive health issues – if their data isn't safe and if the apps don't offer any benefit to their health. The NHS took a good first step in including the best apps and vetting them for clinical safety and data robustness, but there's no point in having a library of approved apps if they're not as safe as they promise to be. Here's hoping the NHS learns from this misstep and makes a library of secure and useful apps that we can trust, to spearhead the revolution in medical apps.



Dozens of unsafe apps have been removed from the NHS Health Apps Library

What we think of this fortnight's top tech news stories and rumours, and how they affect you

Windows 10 Start menu showing ads



What happened?

Many of us welcomed the return of the Start menu in Windows 10, but it seems that Microsoft is now interfering with it again by using it to show ads.

Microsoft removed the Start menu from Windows 8 but brought it back for Windows 10, so you can once again click the icon in the left-hand corner to quickly access settings, apps, recent files and more. Indeed, in Windows 10, the Start menu is bigger than ever, and includes large icons for key apps.

In the latest developer build of Windows 10, users have noticed ads popping up in the Start menu, including a link to watch the Disney Channel for free. Called Spotlight, it appears that this ad slot will be used to recommend apps and entertainment content. Microsoft has been quietly increasing advertising in Windows 10, including marketing material in apps such as Solitaire.

How will it affect you?

The ads are small, and relatively easy to miss,

showing up in the left-hand side of the Start menu as an icon and a line of text underneath the 'Suggested' header. If you want to avoid this advertising, you can easily turn it off by clicking Start, Settings and Personalisation, then deselecting the option 'Occasionally show suggestions in Start'.

If you're concerned about advertising in Windows 10, be sure to go carefully through the privacy settings, which are also accessed via the Start menu.

What do we think?

These ads are tiny, but they're undoubtedly the start of something bigger and could mean adverts appearing more frequently in Windows 10. That may be a good way to give the OS away cheaply or for free, but anyone paying full price for the software shouldn't have to tolerate such intrusions. As long as the ads can be easily turned off, we don't mind them too much – let's hope that doesn't change.

Ofcom price hike may increase mobile bills

What happened?

Telecoms regulator Ofcom has tripled spectrum prices for mobile operators, raising concerns that consumers could be hit with higher contract charges.

Mobile operators pay annual fees for access to the airwaves to offer their services for 2G, 3G and 4G networks. Ofcom has been pushed for years to increase these charges, and has finally done so. The total charges across all the operators was previously £64m, and will now be £200m.

Half of the price increase will hit this October, with the rest coming in next year. Ofcom was criticised for not getting enough money out of operators for the last round of spectrum auctions, for 4G coverage. Although it raised £2.4bn for the government, this was less than half of what had been expected.

How will it affect you?

Mobile operators have warned that any increase to spectrum fees could lead to higher prices for consumers. However, despite

the trebling of spectrum prices, mobile phone bills will not jump by the same ratio. Spread across the many subscribers in the UK, the total bill increase for individual customers would be less than £2 annually, and that's assuming that operators pass on the entire price hike to consumers.

In other words, there's no need to panic. And even if operators use this as an excuse to bump up prices, you're allowed to leave your provider if that increase comes mid-contract.

What do we think?

Ofcom may be right to raise prices, but it needs to do so in a more controlled manner, rather than tripling costs for some operators. Even if the overall cost is small compared to operators' overall revenues, it's easy to see why they are upset.

On the other hand, operators shouldn't be holding their own customers to ransom – we shouldn't have to pay more to cover this, and it's unlikely we will, so why make the threat?

Ofcom



ITV Hub to replace ITV Player and ITV.com

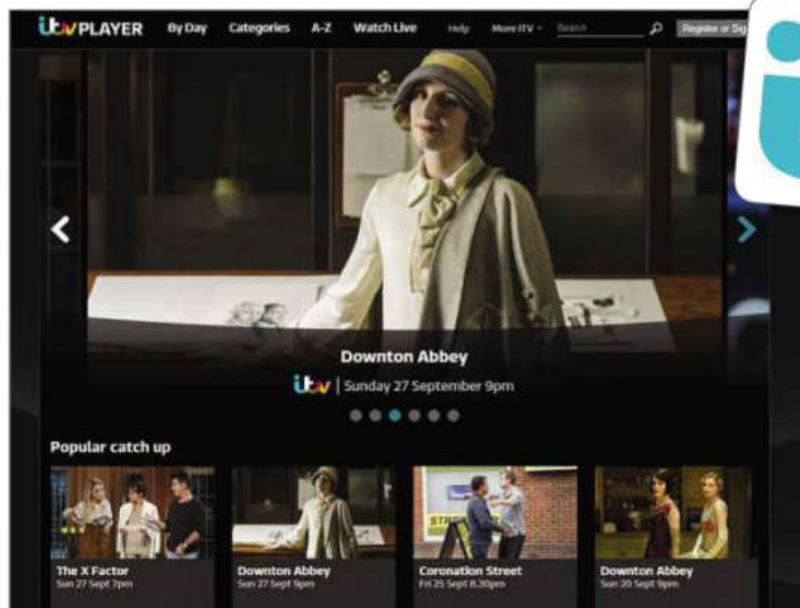
What happened?

ITV announced that later this year it will consolidate its digital services under the new name ITV Hub. This will bring together its catch-up service ITV Player with its programme websites and live streaming services from ITV.com.

ITV Hub will be available on PC, internet-connected TVs and mobile devices, as well as Amazon Fire TV and the Fire TV Stick, and the forthcoming Freeview Play service.

Rufus Radcliffe, ITV's Group Marketing Director, said: "We have created an exciting new brand identity for ITV Hub which will present all of ITV's family of channels and services front and centre, with a distinct, digital look and feel, building off the success of ITV's rebrand. We are looking forward to fully unveiling it later this autumn."

ITV also showed off new branding for ITV Hub that uses the different coloured dots from the various ITV channel logos, and shows how ITV Hub will now be the epicentre of all ITV content.



endless and repetitive adverts, so we hope the new ITV Hub addresses some of these problems.

What do we think?

We think the move makes sense, because ITV now claims 30 per cent of its usage on PC and mobile is from the live streaming of its

How will it affect you?

If you enjoy *Coronation Street*, *Downton Abbey*, *The X Factor* and other popular ITV series, you'll now be able to watch them all in one place, wherever and whenever you want. Channel 4 has successfully combined its live-streaming and catch-up programmes into its All 4 hub, so it makes sense for ITV to follow suit because it will mean less flicking back and forth for viewers. ITV Player has previously been criticised for being buggy and making you sit through

channels rather than people watching its catch-up service ITV Player.

With our television viewing habits increasingly taking place away from TV sets, it's wise for ITV to create a unified hub that will allow you to stream and catch up with shows on the device of your choice, so you no longer feel tied to the sofa. Although we could grumble about the enforced ads, they will mean that ITV Hub remains free rather than charging a subscription fee.



FIRST LOOK

Wileyfox

wileyfox.com/swift

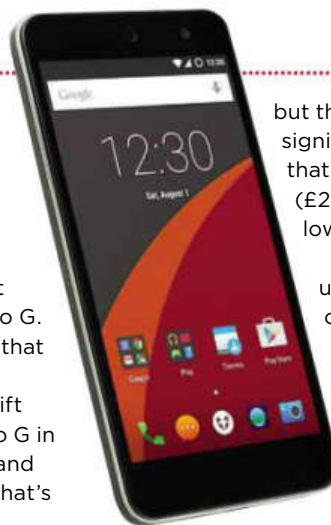
We'd forgive you if you haven't heard of Wileyfox, a London-based startup that's taking on the likes of Motorola by offering reasonably powerful and customisable smartphones at affordable prices. The company's latest device, the Swift, costs £129 and runs the popular community-developed Android distribution Cyanogen (the same OS used by the OnePlus One).

At first glance, the device looks unremarkable. It doesn't look cheap, but is angular, boxy and incredibly simple apart from the Wileyfox logo branded onto its faux-stone rear case. Like the Moto G, the Swift has an excellent display that belies its low price. The 5in, 720 x 1280 IPS panel

makes images and apps look great and it has a higher maximum brightness than even premium devices such as the LG G4.

Unfortunately, it doesn't perform as well as the Moto G. With internal components that are almost identical to the lower-spec Moto E, the Swift was outscored by the Moto G in both Geekbench's single- and multi-core benchmarks. What's more, its battery life was significantly worse, dropping by 13 per cent an hour in our audio test, compared to the 4.7 per cent achieved by the Moto G.

The Swift's 13-megapixel camera captured photos that were passable for uploading to Facebook or Twitter,



but the images were significantly inferior to that of the OnePlus Two (£239) and struggled in low-light conditions.

However, we enjoyed using the Cyanogen operating system, which is designed to be lighter, more customisable and feature-rich than standard Android. By letting you add and remove buttons from

the navigation bar, for example, it offers a much more personalised experience. However, since there's so little that Swift does better than the Moto G, we'd struggle to recommend it over its similarly priced and better performing competitor.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is the BBC launching a Netflix-style iPlayer?

The BBC has announced plans to launch an online subscription service – similar to Netflix – in the US next year. Although popular BBC series such as *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock* are already available in the US through BBC America, the new service will offer viewers across the pond “programmes they wouldn’t otherwise get, showcasing British

actors, our programme-makers and celebrating our culture”, according to BBC director-general Lord Hall.

The Beeb may be talking up the new service to appeal to US audiences, but the real reason for this move is much closer to home. With licence-fee funding coming under increasing scrutiny, the BBC is understandably looking to international revenue as a way to supplement its income. Perhaps more importantly, it demonstrates that the BBC is able to keep pace with other popular streaming contenders such as Netflix, Amazon Instant Video and Now TV.

A subscription-style service has the potential to be a very smart move for the BBC. The corporation has a strong international reputation for high-quality TV programming and, coupled with an enormous back catalogue of shows,



there’s more than enough to differentiate it from other streaming services. The extra money could also be fed back into creating UK-specific content, and keep the corporation alive and ad-free.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



The BBC has already faced heavy criticism from the Conservative government over its business model, so we’re not surprised it’s considering different tactics, especially considering the popularity of *Doctor Who* and the like in the US. Whether an iPlayer subscription would work in the UK remains to be seen, but it’s certainly an interesting idea.

↑ WEBOMETER ↓

WE LIKE...

↑ Order Starbucks coffee with your phone

From this month, it’ll be possible to order and pay for your coffee at Starbucks using only your mobile phone, thanks to the company’s new Android app.



↑ Virgin increases broadband speeds

Virgin Media customers can now sign up for its newly upgraded ultrafast broadband. The new service, which has been branded Vivid, is capable of delivering speeds of up to 200Mbps.



WE DON'T LIKE...

↓ Facebook suffers outages

On September 28, Facebook suffered a widespread service outage for the second time in a week (the first took place on September 24). The social network failed to offer an explanation for either incident.



↓ Selfies more dangerous than sharks

During the first eight months of 2015, more people died while taking selfies than from shark attacks. In one well-publicised incident, a Japanese tourist died of head injuries after falling down the stairs of the Taj Mahal while attempting take a picture of himself and his colleagues.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Kerv

bit.ly/kerv381 | From £25

Contactless payment means you no longer need to carry cash wherever you go, but you still need to keep your wallet on you. With the contactless payment ring Kerv, there are no such problems and you can make of purchases of up to £30 simply by waving the ring over a contactless terminal and waiting for the beep. You don’t need a PIN or a linked phone – just load your Kerv with cash online, and the ring will draw funds from it when used in thousands of shops and cafés, and on London transport. The team is hoping to raise £77,000 by 26 October.



Stay Safe Online

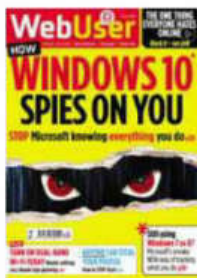
News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

SECURITY ALERT! | What's been bothering us this fortnight

Microsoft responds to Windows 10 privacy concerns

Most of the negative press for Windows 10 has been about Microsoft's methods of collecting, storing and sharing personal data. Last issue (bit.ly/webuser380), we revealed what information the new operating system gathers about you and how to stop it, in our cover feature: 'How Windows 10 Spies on You'.

Since then, the company's Executive Vice President Terry Myerson has published a blog post titled 'Privacy and Windows 10' that attempts to justify its increasingly intrusive policies. It explains that



although the company does collect information (and you'd be hard pushed to find an internet company that doesn't), customers are "in control with the ability to determine what information is collected". Furthermore, any data sent to Microsoft "is encrypted in transit to our servers, and then stored in secure facilities".

The post adds that while device IDs, types and crash logs are collected from Windows 10 users, none of it can identify the person it came from. Cortana, in particular, requires more personal data to function, but Myerson defends it by stating you must actively opt into its more aggressive data collection before it can be used. Although not every privacy concern that's been raised has been addressed in Myerson's post, we're pleased that Microsoft has acknowledged complaints rather than ignoring them altogether.

bit.ly/windowsblog381

Malware hidden in ads on porn sites

A malware campaign that affected Yahoo earlier this year has now appeared on porn sites, according to security firm Malwarebytes. The malware, which is hidden within what appear to be adverts for a service called Sex Messenger, is able to identify whether users are genuine and redirects them to fraudulent pages that often hold their victims to ransom with accusations of illegal behaviour. Although the adverts appeared on porn site Xhamster, ranked the 71st most visited site in the world by web analytics firm Alexa, Malwarebytes security expert Jerome Seguar argues that visiting adult sites is not necessarily any more dangerous than the rest of the web.



bit.ly/malware381

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Steve Bell, Security Expert at BullGuard
(www.bullguard.com)



Q Do you really need security software on your Android phone if you only install apps from the Play Store?

Harrison Wallace, Facebook

A Google generally does a good job of scanning apps for malware before they appear in the Play Store, but hackers have used a

range of techniques to bypass Google's security measures. Just recently, Android malware was bundled with an intelligence-testing game called Brain Test that was published to the Play Store. Google removed it, but shortly afterwards the rogue code appeared in another app using something called an obfuscation tool. It's estimated that hundreds of thousands of devices were infected by this app, which installed a backdoor for adding further malware.

Q Are Mac users too complacent about the threat of OS X malware?

Luke Sutton, Twitter

A In short, yes. For a long time Mac users have believed that Apple operating systems were free of the Trojans and viruses that wreak havoc on Windows machines. Although the scale of attacks targeting Macs is much lower, there have been plenty of incidents in the past and there will be more in the future. It may not be about implanting destructive malware, but there's also the threat of stealing personal information such as banking and credit card data.

Q Are web companies such as Google and Yahoo doing enough to tackle malvertising?

Jonathan Gardiner, Facebook

A We don't know the specifics of what Yahoo and Google are doing, but they generally ensure the safety of ads through automated testing. However, malicious ads don't require user interaction to execute their payload and simply browsing to a website that has them is enough to start the infection chain. For this reason, it's likely that behind the scenes action is being taken to thwart ad malware. If companies such as Google and Yahoo don't act on this, their entire revenue model is under threat.

THE

FREE! HEALTH / FITNESS / ACTIVITY / MOTIVATION / REWARD
COACH

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EFFECT



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Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

FOOD

RELAUNCH

Food Network

www.foodnetwork.co.uk

The revamped website for UKTV's Food Network is guaranteed to make you hungry. It's jam-packed with recipes that can be quickly filtered according to your needs and there are fresh spins on classic dishes complete with appetising photos. The homepage is a bit full-on, parading a melting pot of quirky features, random tips and fun quizzes, but each article can be saved and shared, and visitors are encouraged to leave comments. You can catch up on cookery shows you've missed and view the Food Network's schedule, and we love that you can filter recipes by Occasion, such as Burns Night and Diwali, and for special dietary needs.

Our rating



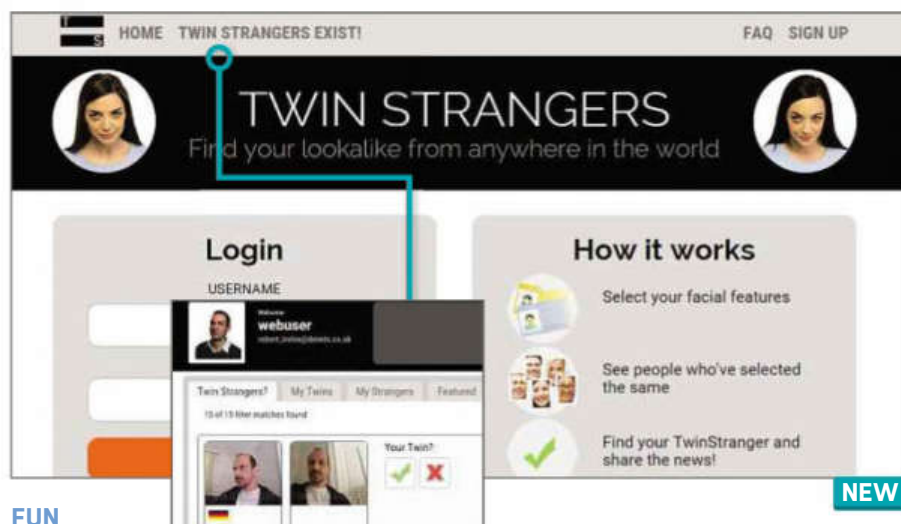
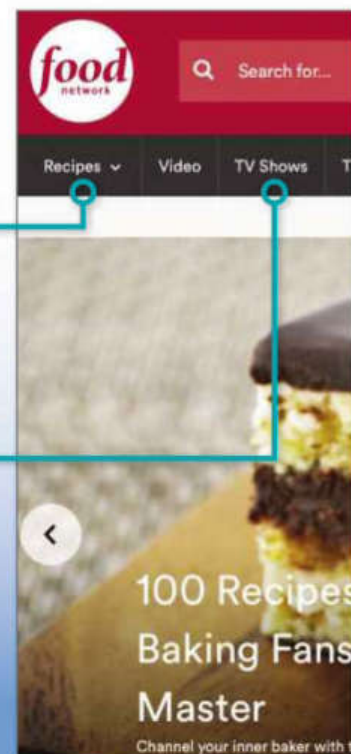
RECIPES

Recipes are organised by ingredient, cuisine and dietary type



TV SHOWS

Binge-watch programmes from the Food Network for free



FUN

Twin Strangers

twinstrangers.net

It's flattering to think of ourselves as unique but according to this site, we all have a double somewhere in the world. To find your doppelganger, upload two photos and provide some information regarding the shape of your face, eyebrows and lips (you can enter a fake name to prevent your evil twin from tracking you down). Once this is done, the site will suggest other members who it thinks look like you. We didn't know whether to laugh or cry when we saw our matches, who included a dour German, a plump Lionel Richie lookalike and a possible serial killer, but you can dismiss any you don't like the look of and just save and share the flattering ones!

Our rating



RELAUNCH

TECHNOLOGY

The Gadget Show Live

www.gadgetshowlive.net

Next year, the annual exhibition for Channel 5's *The Gadget Show* runs from 31 March to 3 April and this website has been created as a hub for all the various comings and goings surrounding the event. The tile-based design seems a bit dated and Windows 8-like, which is surprising for a site so heavily linked to cutting-edge technology, and with a few months still to go, there's little info about the exhibitors set to attend. But there is detailed pricing information and the option to register your interest for tickets, as well as a detailed FAQ and photos and videos from past events.

Our rating



We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



Jaw-Dropping Baking Recipes

Course ▾ Occasion ▾ Ingredient ▾ Cuisine ▾ Special Diets ▾

21 OMG Red Velvet Recipes

50 Ways with Chocolate Chips

BAKING
This new section provides recipes for cakes and cookies

QUIZZES
Discover more about your culinary tastes with fun quizzes

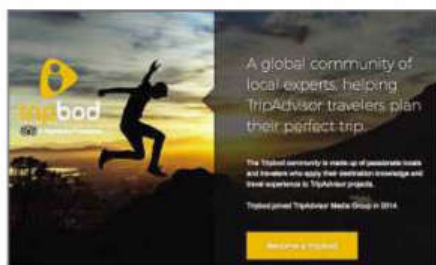
WHAT SHOULD YOUR NEXT BIRTHDAY CAKE BE?
Find out which birthday cake you should totally get someone else to bake for you

EMPIRE COOKIES

LEMON MARSHMALLOW SQUARES

All Hardcore Need to

These mind-blowing baking recipes every



TRAVEL

Tripbod

www.tripbod.com

A global community of local experts, helping TripAdvisor travelers plan their perfect trip.

The Tripbod community is made up of passionate locals and travelers who apply their destination knowledge and travel experience to TripAdvisor projects.

Triptod joined TripAdvisor's Media Group in 2014.

RELAUNCH

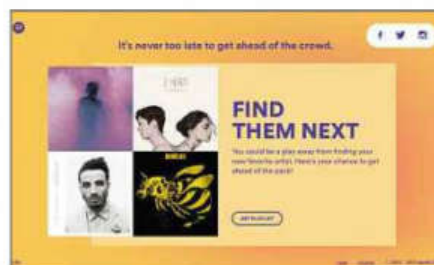
TRAVEL

Tripbod

www.tripbod.com

Bought by TripAdvisor last year, Tripbod connects travellers with local experts. It's been given a sleek overhaul as it seeks to gather more users to share their knowledge and produce travel guides and itineraries to help tourists find their way around the world. You're asked to suggest destinations when you join and the Tripbod team then uses this info to commission paid-for articles that end up on TripAdvisor. The site is appealingly laid out with detailed explanations of how it works, but signing up is arduous, requiring a CV or LinkedIn profile and examples of previous work.

Our rating

It's never too late to get ahead of the crowd.

FIND THEM NEXT

You could be a great way from finding your next favorite artist. There's your chance to get ahead of the pack.

MUSIC

Found Them First

spotify-foundthemfirst.com

NEW

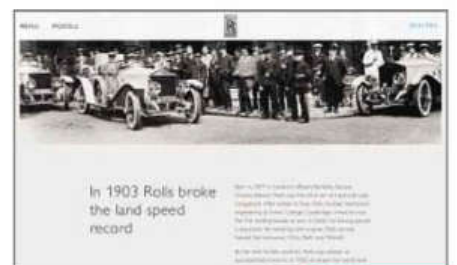
MUSIC

Found Them First

spotify-foundthemfirst.com

This site from Spotify is aimed at music snobs who enjoy bragging about having discovered a band or singer way before they became popular. After signing in using your Spotify credentials, the site speedily goes through your songs and albums to find out if you really are ahead of the musical curve (alas, we were late to the party with Sheena Easton). At the same time, it creates a playlist of fresh artists that it hopes will allow you to boast that you "found them first" in the future. It's a fun way for Spotify to promote up-and-coming talent while potentially pandering to a few egos.

Our rating

MOTURING

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com

In 1903 Rolls broke the land speed record.

RELAUNCH

MOTURING

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars

www.rolls-roycemotorcars.com

Rolls-Royce may be one of British motoring's grandest names but its recent history hasn't been entirely smooth. Now owned by BMW, it still has four models of car available and this beautiful, scrolling website shows them off using gorgeous imagery, flowery language and stunningly shot videos. At the same time, it pays homage to the company's past with a great history section that stretches back to 1904. While the site can feel overwhelming, it certainly ups a gear in the information stakes, with downloadable brochures for prospective and aspiring owners to peruse at leisure.

Our rating





RELAUNCH

SHOPPING

Country Baskets

www.countrybaskets.co.uk

Despite its name and logo, this online store sells much more than just baskets and artificial flowers, providing everything you need to create perfect displays at parties, weddings and other occasions. Its impressive range of stock includes balloons, candle holders, craft supplies, lighting and much more, with all products accompanied by zoomable images, concise descriptions and stock info. The relaunched site is easier to navigate, with a more spacious and sophisticated design, and attractive banners at the top of each category. With its Christmas section now open for business, this is one to bookmark.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

DRINK

Sherry Wines

www.sherry.org

Often dismissed as a tippable for granny at Christmas, sherry is apparently making a comeback and nowhere more so than at this revamped hub for the fortified wine. Here, you'll find a guide to the many varieties, along with a bottled history of sherry; recipes for cocktails and accompanying dishes; and info about tastings, courses and events, including next month's International Sherry Week. Best of all is the Sherry Spots feature, which finds you bars and restaurants around the world that serve sherry. With its stylish design, high quality photos and effective use of social elements, it's the ultimate resource for sherry aficionados.

Our rating



NEW

EDUCATION

SchoolDash

www.schooldash.com

SchoolDash helps parents and teachers sift more easily through masses of data from the Department for Education, by presenting it in the form of maps and dashboards, although the latter weren't yet live when we visited. You can filter the colour-coded maps of England by all manner of criteria including average class size, ethnicity and academic achievements, as well as by school type, and then click to zoom into a region and local authority, although not specific schools. This provides a good overview of standards in a particular area, but the site is still very much a work in progress so just one to watch for now.

Our rating



NEW

PEOPLE

Jeremy Vine

jeremyvine.tv

There's something endearingly camp about the official new site for the TV presenter and journalist, from the pictures of Jezza larking about in garish shirts to the cute insertion of 'the' before his name on the homepage. It's a cut above most celebrity sites because you can tell Vine actually contributes to the content, which combines blog posts, photos and videos from his latest shows, including *Eggheads*, with career highlights, childhood memories, tweets and podcasts. Jeremy actively encourages visitor comments, and you can even contact him through the site (via his manager) to hire him as an after-dinner speaker. It certainly scores well on our swingometer!

Our rating



RELAUNCH

EDUCATION

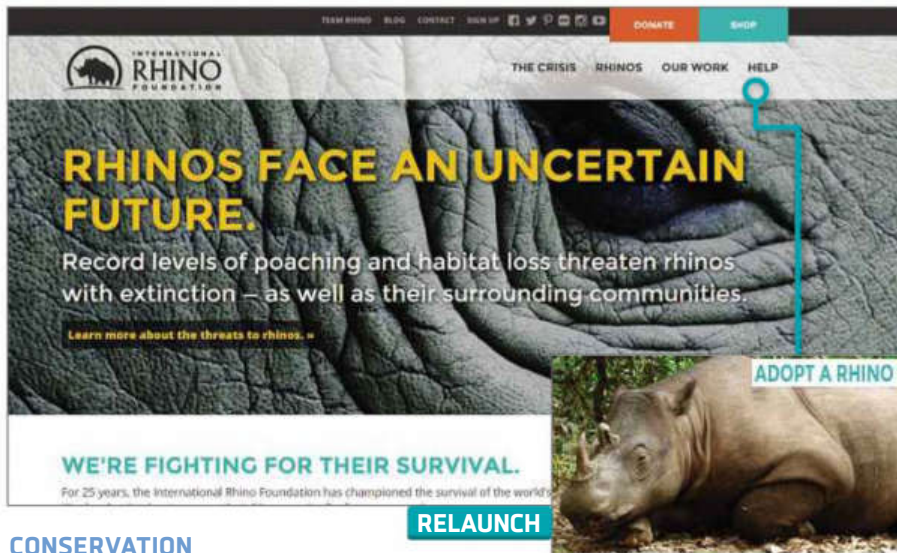
MyTutorWeb

www.mytutorweb.co.uk

Students who need help with anything from accounting to tech studies can find and book an online session with a tutor through this smart site. Streamlined to make it even simpler to use – just choose a subject and a level, then click 'Find my tutor' – MyTutorWeb has also added clearer information about how it works and more prominent details of prices, which range from £18 to £30 an hour. All the 900 or so undergraduate tutors have achieved top grades at university and been interviewed by the site. You can also 'meet' your tutor for 15 minutes before you book, and read ratings and reviews from their students.

Our rating





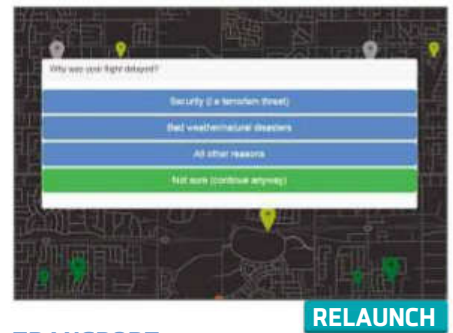
CONSERVATION

International Rhino Foundation

rhinos.org

As big, bold and beautiful as the animals it hopes to save, the revamped website for the International Rhino Foundation is a massive improvement on the old one, which looked a bit cramped. As well as reading about the threat to the species – poaching has reduced the rhino population from 500,000 to 29,000 since the start of the 20th Century – you can learn about the foundation's work, make a donation online and buy rhino merchandise from the shop. We especially like that you can adopt one of five Sumatran rhinos (they remain in their Indonesian sanctuary, so you won't need to clear out the garage) to receive various gifts and befriend them on Facebook. Note that the site is based in the US so all prices are in dollars.

Our rating



TRANSPORT

DoNotPay

www.donotpay.co.uk

Yes, we reviewed this site last issue – in this very spot, in fact – but DoNotPay has proved so popular (despite our stingy three-star review) that it's quickly expanded beyond helping drivers challenge parking tickets and now lets you request compensation for delayed flights, in much the same way. Choose the option when you log in, then answer questions about the region and time of your flight, and the length and cause of the delay, to find out if you're eligible for compensation. You can then fill in the online form to generate a letter to print and send to the airline. It's a simple but brilliant idea – have another star, mate!

Our rating



+ ALSO NEW

HEALTH

Fight for Sight

fightforsight.org.uk



Currently celebrating its 50th anniversary, the "Eye Research Charity" has a bold, attractive new site that presents its superbly illustrated information in a way that's both easy to read and understand. You can browse an A-Z of more than 100 eye conditions, read about Fight for Sight's research and learn how to get involved through volunteering and events.

TOURISM

Stay In Cornwall

www.stayincornwall.co.uk



If you fancy a visit to England's most picturesque county, this excellent site will find you the perfect places to stay, eat and explore. The relaunched site has even more beautiful photos and useful new features, such as the option to save your favourite accommodation to contact later and fun infographics of things to see and do.

ALTRUISM

Scotland Welcomes Refugees

www.scotlandwelcomesrefugees.scot



This site from the Scottish Government and Scottish Refugee Council encourages people to help refugees by providing accommodation, translation and health services, and by donating to various charities. It's currently short on detail about what Scotland is actually doing but it's a good focal point and future updates will explain when and where refugees will be resettled.

WEB DESIGN

CodeWeek

www.codeweek.eu



Europe CodeWeek, which runs from 10 to 18 October, is an initiative to help kids learn basic programming skills. The site lists all 16 events in the UK as well as providing links to coding lessons. Ironically, the site itself is rather messy, with an overly wordy news section, but it's certainly a great cause.



WEBSITE SECRETS

Unlock Google's Super Mario surprise

Last month saw the 30th anniversary of the groundbreaking Nintendo video game Super Mario Bros, and Google saw fit to mark the occasion with one of its trademark Easter Eggs (not that this one is particularly hidden). To uncover the surprise, simply search Google for 'super mario bros'. In a box to the right of the search results, you'll see one of the flashing question-mark blocks that appeared in the original game. Keep clicking this to score coins worth 200 points, complete with the classic sound effect. It's strangely addictive. ■



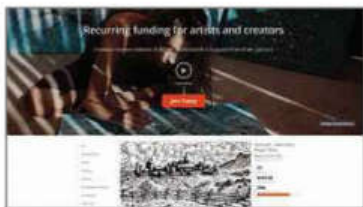
Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Make money without ads

Ad blockers are making it harder for web builders to earn money through advertising, so what are the alternatives? If you have a good number of loyal visitors, try encouraging donations through services such as Patreon (www.patreon.com). Contributor



services could be the next growth area, and even Google is getting in on the act (contributor.google.com); it's US-only at the moment, but worth watching. Or you could try launching a Kickstarter (www.kickstarter.com) project to encourage visitors to chip in for future projects in exchange for

rewards. Be aware, though, that any money you earn, even from a hobby, can be taxed. You can find more information at bit.ly/tax381.

WordPress security alert

If you run an up-to-date WordPress website, you can rest assured that the core code is safe from hackers. However, because of its open-source nature, your plug-ins and themes may not be as secure. Search for your plug-ins in the WPScan Vulnerability Database at wpsvuln.db.com. It only takes a few minutes but you'll be glad you did if you find you have one that could compromise your website.

Deal of the Fortnight

Easyspace (www.easyspace.co.uk) is offering 60 per cent off 'online' domains until 26 October.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Nick Akam,
Chief Technical Officer,
Free Virtual Servers



(www.freevirtualservers.com)

Q How do I host sound files on my website, so people can play and listen to them?

holttum75, via Web User forums

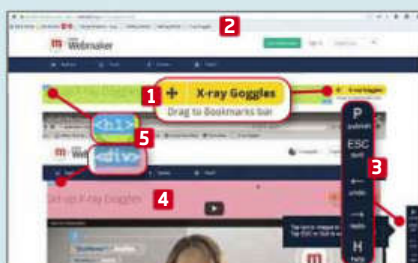
A There are lots of ways you can do this. If you're using WordPress, you can use a SoundCloud plug-in or an HTML5 music player plug-in (you can see a list of favourites from Cats who Code at bit.ly/audio381), which lets you host your own files. Depending on the sound file, you could also try setting up a podcast that people can subscribe to.

Personally, I would recommend adding an HTML5 player plug-in to your website and choosing a web-hosting provider you can contact easily in case you have any difficulties uploading content.

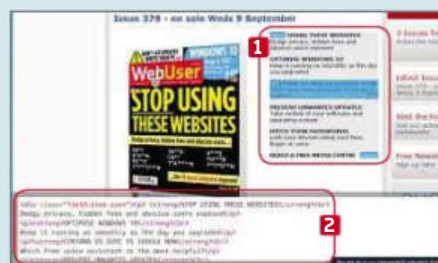


MINI WORKSHOP | Look behind the scenes of any website with X-ray Goggles
Mozilla X-ray Goggles: bit.ly/xray381 |  10 mins | Any browser

If you come across a website with a particularly impressive and inspiring design, you can use Mozilla's X-ray Goggles tool to dive into the background code and take a look at how it was constructed



1 Install the bookmarklet **1** at bit.ly/goggles381 by dragging it to the bookmarks bar. **2** Activate the Goggles tool by clicking the bookmarklet. You'll know it's on when a menu appears **3** and anything you move your mouse over becomes highlighted in a colour, **4** with the HTML tags displayed in the corners. **5**



2 While hovering over an element, press the up and down cursor keys to expand into the parent tags, such as a box that's surrounding the element, **1** or shrink it back again. Click an item to see the full HTML tag that brings it to the page. **2** You can edit it to make simple changes so you can see how things work – they won't be saved on the real site.



3 To see the inner-workings of the CSS, hold down the 'C' button to bring up a full list of CSS elements. **1** Press the spacebar to edit an element and see how different parameters affect it. Hover your mouse over the section you want to change and left-click to select it. **2** A tool tip explains what the CSS code does. **3** Press Esc to quit.

WebUser

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ON SALE NOW!

Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Multi-device chargers

Why have cables strewn across the house when you can charge all your devices from one socket? **Andy Shaw** tests five devices that will revolutionise the way you charge your gadgets

Having to charge all your phones and tablets is the downside of our portable, digital lives. Whether you have to fight with your family over an available plug socket or you just loathe the mess of trailing wires, it can be a headache.

In this Group Test, we've hunted down a range of charging stations designed to tidy up and centralise your charging points, and give everyone the space to charge their devices from a single socket.

HOW WE TESTED

We gathered a typical family's collection of devices, including a couple of iPads, an iPhone, an iPod and an HTC phone. We tested the manufacturer's quoted power ratings by plugging in as many of our devices as the charger could

handle, to confirm there was enough power to get the batteries charging at a satisfactory rate. We also looked at how well they tidy away cables, the range of devices they can charge and the other functions that they perform.

Griffin PowerDock 5 | £79.95 | www.johnlewis.com

FEATURES ★★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★★

The Griffin PowerDock 5 looks like a cross between a toast rack and a USB hub. The vertical racks are transparent plastic plates that slot loosely into the top of the hub. They feel wobbly when they're dropped into place, but are more than sturdy enough to rest an iPad on.

The PowerDock can charge five devices, which is enough for the average family to have at least one device per person on charge at any one time. It doesn't come with any charging cables of its own, so you have to use the USB cables that came with your devices, or buy extra cables. The USB ports are housed on the outside, just below the slots for each device, so there's no cable management. This means that the charging station can look like you've thrown a bowl of spaghetti over it unless you invest in shorter cables or are happy to spend time tucking cables behind each device to keep it looking smart.

We plugged in all five of our test devices – two iPads, two phones and an iPod. Griffin claims that it supplies 2.1A to each of the five USB ports, which is the equivalent power that you'd normally get from an iPad charger. All our devices charged at the same rate on the dock



without any noticeable increase in time taken to charge fully.

The USB ports seemed a bit shallow, leaving some bare metal exposed on the plug, which left us unsure as to whether they were properly connected, but it's a minor niggle when set against the overall benefit provided by this charging station.

VERDICT

★★★★★

Griffin's PowerDock 5 is the best device we tested for simultaneously charging a whole household's worth of mobile devices. It works with any device that usually plugs into a USB charger, and supplies plenty of power across all five of its USB ports. It doesn't matter whether you've got five tablets or five phones, they'll all sit neatly in the dock. However, there's no cable management, so if you want to stick with the cables you've got, rather than buy shorter ones, the repetitive plugging in and unplugging of all five devices will inevitably create a tangle of wires.

Leitz Complete Desktop Multi-Charger | **£58.80** | www.rebelofficesupplies.co.ukFEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

Leitz's charging station is less flexible than the Griffin's, and is designed with a more specific configuration of devices in mind. It has a single tablet stand at the back, equipped with a 2A USB socket, then three more 1A ports for smaller devices with a rubber-ridged table area at the front to rest them on.

It comes with a selection of short charging cables: Mini- and Micro-USB and an old-style 30-pin Apple connector. If you need to add your own cables, there is a neat system for keeping them tucked away under the table area, which hinges at the back like an old-fashioned school desk. Inside the cavity, there are three blocks for winding cables around and a slot for the required lengths of cables to pop out.

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD**VERDICT**

★★★★☆

The Leitz dock isn't as flexible or as powerful as Griffin's, but if neatness is a priority, the hidden cavity can hide all manner of cable jumbles. However, it's more of a bother to then remove cables if you need to take them with you.

Avantree PowerHouse | **£29.99** | www.amazon.co.ukFEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

The PowerHouse uses rubberised blocks to lean your devices against as they're charging, so it looks like an attractive, interesting gadget even when it doesn't have its full quota of four devices charging on it. You can even switch the colours around, from a retro-looking black, grey or red, to lime green.

The USB ports are housed underneath the unit, which is mostly hollow. This cavity has been conveniently lined with Velcro and includes Velcro straps, so you can wrap up and tidy away cables with ease. It comes with Mini- and Micro-USB cables, but you'll need to add your own to make full use of the available ports. The device shares a total 4.5A across its four ports, so the more you have plugged in, the slower they'll charge. The arrangement of the blocks lets you support a couple of tablets and fill the gaps with phone-sized devices.

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD**VERDICT**

★★★★☆

This compact charging dock still manages to tidy away cables and provide sufficient power to charge all your devices. It isn't as high-powered as the Griffin but it's more suitable if you're looking for a smaller, neater dock.

MiPow 2 Ports USB Wall Charger | **£14.99** | www.amazon.co.ukFEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

This power splitter from MiPow is a compact portable charging station, with a neat and attractive design, but it disappointed in a number of ways. The plug pins on the circular device fold into the casing when it's not in use, but it was a fiddly job getting the pins out and they're prone to collapsing in on themselves when you're trying to plug the device into a wall socket. The top can rotate 90 degrees, so you can still plug things into its ports even if the positioning of the wall socket means it's blocked on one side.

The two USB ports on the device provide only 1A of power between the two sockets, so if you have two devices plugged in, they'll only get 0.5A each. We plugged in our two iPads and, although they both registered as having chargers plugged in, they didn't get much more than a trickle of charge. It's more successful at charging smaller devices such as phones, but it will still take longer than the higher-powered chargers.

**VERDICT**

★★★☆☆

There are plenty of dual-socket chargers around that cost less than this MiPow model. The folding pins are an interesting addition but they don't work very well and the low power means it's best used for charging phones.

Groov-e SoundCurve Alarm Clock Radio Speaker | **£23.98** | www.amazon.co.ukFEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

It makes sense to charge your devices overnight, but you might not have enough wall sockets to have them close to hand when you're sleeping. This radio alarm clock, which

doubles as a Bluetooth speaker, attempts to solve the problem by providing two USB ports on the top.

It's a neat concept but, sadly, it's not as good as it sounds. The USB ports are under-powered and it was the only device in this Group Test that was incapable of charging our two iPads at the same time. It managed to power up a tablet and phone simultaneously, but it was slow.

The other elements are similarly disappointing: the radio is FM only, so it can't pick up digital stations, and the Bluetooth speaker's sound quality is underwhelming.

**VERDICT**

★★★☆☆

While this sounds like an impressive collection of features to cram into one device, it failed to impress us. As a charging dock, it's particularly disappointing, with under-powered USB sockets that struggle to charge larger devices.

Group Test Multi-Device Chargers



	Griffin PowerDock 5	Leitz Complete Desktop Multi-Charger	Avantree PowerHouse	MiPow 2 Ports USB Wall Charger	Groov-e SoundCurve
WEBSITE	griffintechology.com	www.leitz.com	www.avantree.com	www.mipow.com	www.groov-e.co.uk
PRICE	£79.95	£58.80	£29.99	£14.99	£23.98
BUY FROM	www.johnlewis.com	www.rebeloffice.com supplies.co.uk	www.amazon.co.uk	www.amazon.co.uk	www.amazon.co.uk
CABLE TIDY	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
CABLES INCLUDED	✗	1 x Mini-USB, 1 x Micro-USB, 1 x Apple 30-pin	1 x Mini-USB, 1 x Micro-USB	✗	✗
NUMBER OF DEVICES	5	4	4	2	2
TYPE OF DEVICE	Any USB	Any USB	Any USB	Any USB	Any USB
EXTRAS	✗	✗	Different colour scheme options	✗	Alarm clock, radio, Bluetooth speaker
OUTPUT	2.1A on each port	1 x 2A, 3 x 1A ports	4.5A (shared between four ports)	1A (shared between two ports)	2A shared between two ports and the dock's other functions
DIMENSIONS	200 x 130 x 80mm	240 x 204 x 80mm	154 x 114 x 85mm	48 x 48 x 37mm	200 x 100 x 82mm
WEIGHT	340g	950g	305g	63g	349g

OUR VERDICT

We believe that the main purpose of a multi-device charger is to get your gadgets fully charged as quickly as possible, and the Griffin PowerDock 5 is the best at this, so it gets our Gold Award. It can charge the largest number of devices and was the most powerful of the models we tested. The only downside was the absence of a cable tidy.

Our Silver Award goes to the Leitz Complete Desktop Multi-Charger, which can charge four devices at a time. It's not as powerful as the Griffin, but you can tuck your cables away in a neat cavity underneath its phone tray.

For a more compact option that still tidies and charges well, we liked the Avantree PowerHouse, with its customisable colour blocks, which won our Bronze Award. ■





Web User's Best Buys

Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

MULTI-DEVICE CHARGER

Griffin PowerDock 5

£79.95 from www.johnlewis.com

Date tested: September 2015

Griffin's PowerDock 5 lets you charge a whole household's worth of mobile devices at one time, supplying plenty of power across all five of its USB ports. It doesn't matter whether you've got five tablets or five phones, they'll all sit nicely in this dock, although you'll need to make sure that the cables don't get tangled.

KEY SPECS

Supports five USB devices ■ 2.1A output on each port ■ 200 x 130 x 80mm ■ 340g



NEW!

WINDOWS 10 PC

PC Specialist Evora

£559 from www.pcspecialist.co.uk

Date tested: September 2015

This is more of a workaday PC than an all-out powerhouse, but it's cheaper than other Windows 10 PCs and its impressive gaming performance gives it lots of potential as an all-round family computer.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 3.2GHz Intel Core i5-4460 processor ■ 8GB of memory ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 120GB SSD ■ 2 x USB 3, 6 x USB 2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 477 x 450 x 190mm ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty including one-year parts



WI-FI EXTENDER

Netgear Nighthawk AC1900 Extender

£130 from www.broadbandbuyer.co.uk

Date tested: July 2015

The Netgear Nighthawk is pricey, but it's also fast, powerful and built to last. Its advanced tools will be compatible with future Wi-Fi standards and it provides excellent performance.

KEY SPECS

AC1900 Wi-Fi ■ Dual-band ■ 5 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ USB 3 ■ WPA and WPA2 security ■ DLNA server ■ 252 x 174 x 31mm ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty



NETWORK CAMERA

Y-cam HomeMonitor HD

£150 from www.homemonitor.me

Date tested: June 2015

The Y-cam HomeMonitor HD will save you money in the long run if you want to save captured motion-detected footage online. Its free online storage option supports a wide range of devices.

KEY SPECS

Apps for Android, iOS, Windows Phone, Roku ■ 1/4in CMOS sensor ■ Viewing angle: horizontal 80°, vertical 45°, diagonal 87° ■ 1,280 x 720 pixels resolution ■ 15fps frame rate ■ Ethernet and 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 85 x 85 x 30mm ■ 1150g



BUDGET LAPTOP

HP Stream 11

£179.99 from store.hp.com/ukstore

Date tested: April 2015

The HP Stream 11 offers excellent performance and a respectable battery life. It's a sleek, attractive laptop, available in blue or magenta, with a good screen that offers wide viewing angles.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 2.16GHz Intel Celeron N2840 processor ■ 2GB of memory ■ 11.6in non-touchscreen ■ 32GB flash drive ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ Single-band 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 300 x 206 x 20mm ■ 1.29kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty



MULTIROOM SPEAKER

Sonos Play:1

£169 from www.currys.co.uk

Date tested: March 2015

The Sonos Play:1 offers impressive audio quality and comes with excellent software and great apps that provide seamless integration with music services. It's the ideal speaker to use as a starting point for a home entertainment system.

KEY SPECS

2 x speakers ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet ■ Android and iOS apps ■ Compatible with UPnP and SMB servers ■ AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG and WAV ■ 161 x 12 x 12mm ■ 1.8kg





SSD

Samsung 850 Pro 256GB

£136.03 from www.kikatek.com

Date tested: February 2015

The Samsung 850 Pro is crammed with new technology that makes it faster and more durable than its competitors. You could buy a similarly sized SSD for much less, but in our tests the cheaper models weren't as fast and they don't come with the 850 Pro's generous 10-year warranty.



KEY SPECS

256GB (also available in 128GB, 512GB & 1TB) ■ 53p per GB ■ SATA III interface ■ 2.5in drive case ■ 10-year warranty ■ 100 x 70 x 7mm ■ 66g

TABLET

Google Nexus 9

£319 from play.google.com

Date tested: February 2015

The Nexus 9 is our favourite Android tablet. It has a fantastic screen – even better than the iPad Air 2's – and superb battery life, lasting over 15 hours in our tests. It's cheaper than the latest iPad and comes in 16GB and 32GB capacities.



KEY SPECS

8.9in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ Dual-core 2.3GHz 64-bit Nvidia Tegra K1 Denver processor ■ 16/32GB storage ■ 4G option costs £60 extra (32GB models only) ■ Android 5.0 ■ 228 x 154 x 8mm ■ 425g

WINDOWS 8.1 LAPTOP

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA

£449.95 from www.johnlewis.com

Date tested: January 2015

This touchscreen laptop folds over into a chunky tablet. It's well built, did well in our performance tests and has a fantastic battery life.



KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.9GHz Intel Core i3-4030U processor ■ 4GB of memory ■ 13.3in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 326 x 232 x 22mm ■ 1.75kg ■ One-year collect-and-return warranty

WIRELESS ROUTER

D-Link DIR-868L

£65.97 from www.dabs.com

Date tested: December 2014

If you're willing to switch your wireless devices to the 5GHz network, the D-Link DIR-868L offers fast and reliable performance at a great price. It's simple to set up and provides a handy wizard to guide you through the process.



KEY SPECS

Dual-band 2.4GHz and 5GHz ■ 802.11b/g/n ■ 1,300Mbps theoretical maximum speed ■ 6 x internal antennas ■ 4 x 10/100/1000Mbps Ethernet ports ■ WPA and WPA2 encryption ■ 1 x USB 3 port ■ 217 x 123 x 102mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

DESKTOP PC

Chillblast Fusion Obelisk

£699.98 from www.chillblast.com

Date tested: November 2014

This great all-round desktop PC achieved a good overall performance in both our Windows and gaming tests. It runs quietly, has a good-quality monitor and is packed with great components, including a fast SSD and a generous hard drive.



KEY SPECS

Quad-core 4.2GHz Intel Core i5-4690K processor (overclocked) ■ 8GB of memory ■ 5 x USB3, 5 x USB2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 120GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ Windows 8.1 ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

KEYBOARD

Cherry MX-Board 3.0

£55 from www.kikatek.com

Date tested: November 2014

The Cherry MX-Board 3.0 is a hard-wearing mechanical keyboard that's a pleasure to type on. It's quiet for a mechanical model but still makes more noise than a standard keyboard. It doesn't have a lot of features, but it's ideal if you're looking for a standard, good-quality keyboard.



KEY SPECS

104 keys ■ 1 x USB port ■ 1.8m detachable cable ■ 2 non-slip surfaces ■ 2 rubber caps for adjustable feet ■ 44.6 x 15.8 x 2.8cm ■ 0.83kg ■ Win-Key lock

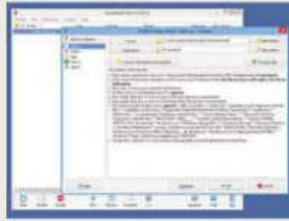
SOFTWARE & SERVICES

BACKUP AND SYNC

SyncBackFree

Free from bit.ly/syncback366
Date tested: March 2015

SyncBackFree is very capable software that gives you plenty of control over how it can be used. If you know what you need from your backups and you're prepared to spend some time configuring the options, SyncBackFree has everything you need.



KEY FEATURES

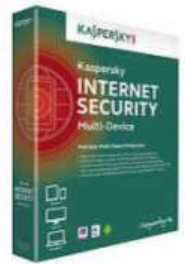
Synchronise: Copy files in both directions ■ Restore back-up files easily ■ Email logs ■ Schedule backups ■ Simple and Advanced mode ■ Runs on Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP ■ Extensive Help documentation and support

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2015

£17.99 from bit.ly/kaspofter
Date tested: January 2015

Kaspersky Internet Security performed near-perfectly throughout our tests last year, with only one unwanted program slipping through. Our sister title *Computeractive* is selling it at the reader-offer price of £17.99 (full price £39.99). Click the link above.



KEY FEATURES

Anti-virus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts ■ Advanced parental control ■ Licences for one, three and five PCs; for one or two years, or pay monthly ■ Multi-Device version for Mac and Android protection

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk
Date tested: December 2014

With its tidy interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides everything an amateur photographer needs and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.



KEY FEATURES

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ (32- and 64-bit) ■ Bundled photo organiser ■ Content-aware edits ■ Guided edits ■ People-beautifier tools ■ RAW support

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk
Date tested: December 2014

Premiere Elements 13's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better video-editing software for the price.



KEY FEATURES

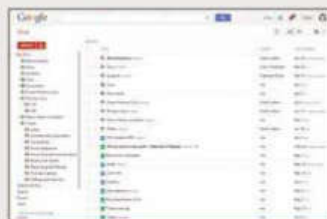
Automatic editing ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Burn to DVD and Blu-ray ■ Image stabiliser ■ Stop-motion capture ■ Motion tracking ■ Musical scores and sound effects ■ Upload to YouTube and Vimeo

ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com
Date tested: August 2014

Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.



KEY FEATURES

15GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+ ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month

ONLINE SITE BUILDER

Weebly

From free from www.weebly.com
Date tested: May 2014

Weebly's drag-and-drop interface makes it extremely easy to use. Its templates are a little restrictive, but there are still plenty of options to choose from and the results look great. It also has free Android and iOS apps.



KEY FEATURES

115 templates ■ Unlimited storage ■ SEO tools ■ Meta tags ■ Password protection ■ E-commerce tools ■ Ad-free Starter edition ■ Android and iOS apps ■ RSS ■ Site stats

Best Free Software

SYSTEM UPDATER

Driver Booster 3 Free

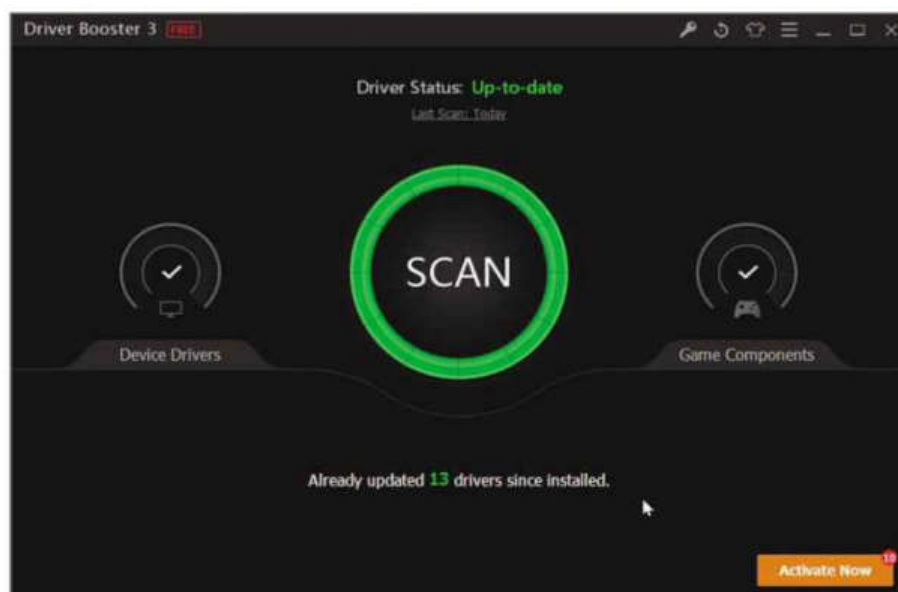
bit.ly/driver381

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 13.6MB

Outdated, incorrect or faulty hardware drivers can cause all sorts of problems on your PC, but checking that you have the latest working versions takes time, especially as you'll need to perform the required updates manually. This is where programs like Driver Booster can save the day.

This free tool scans your system looking for old or missing drivers, and then gives you the chance to update everything to the newest versions with a single click. There's no catch, and the process is quick and painless.



The latest version of the software has a much larger online database, which now recognises more than 200,000 drivers. The game components database has also been enlarged, which helps the software fix problems with plugins such as Java and VC Runtimes.

The updated interface is simpler than ever, and we found that the software works perfectly in Windows 10.

There's also a paid-for Pro version of Driver Booster that can improve

gaming and video playback, and boost system stability and performance. It can download drivers during idle moments and back up previous drivers for safe restore. This version will set you back £15, but the free edition is enough for most people's needs.

In practice, we've found that IObit's program finds plenty of outdated and missing drivers that other similar tools miss, and it's well worth installing and giving it a try.

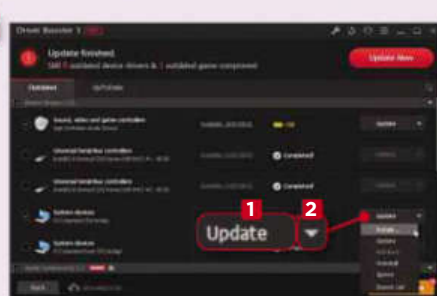
Make sure you decline any unwanted extras during installation.



MINI WORKSHOP | Check your system is up to date using Driver Booster 3



1 When you run Driver Booster, it will automatically scan your system and present you with its findings. The banner at the top **1** provides a summary of the number of device drivers and game components available to update. Each item is colour-coded **2** so you can see how old it is. Missing drivers are also displayed here.



2 Click the Update button next to an item **1** to download and install the latest version. You may need to temporarily disable your antivirus software when doing this. Click the down arrow next to the button to access other options. **2** You can view the driver details, update it, uninstall it, ignore it, roll back changes, and export the list for later viewing.



3 You can also update all of the old or missing drivers by clicking the Update Now button. **1** Untick any drivers **2** you don't want to include in the mass update. You can view all the drivers installed on your system under the UpToDate tab, **3** and customise and configure the software by clicking the menu button. **4**

This fortnight's top new software downloads to help you make the most of your PC, and they're all FREE

APP MANAGER

10AppsManager for Windows 10

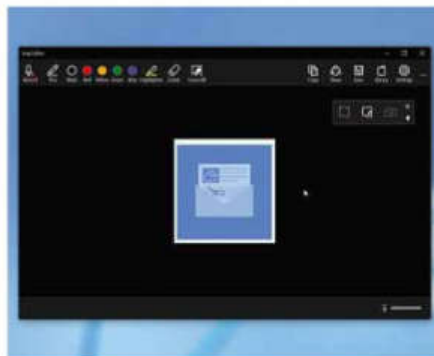
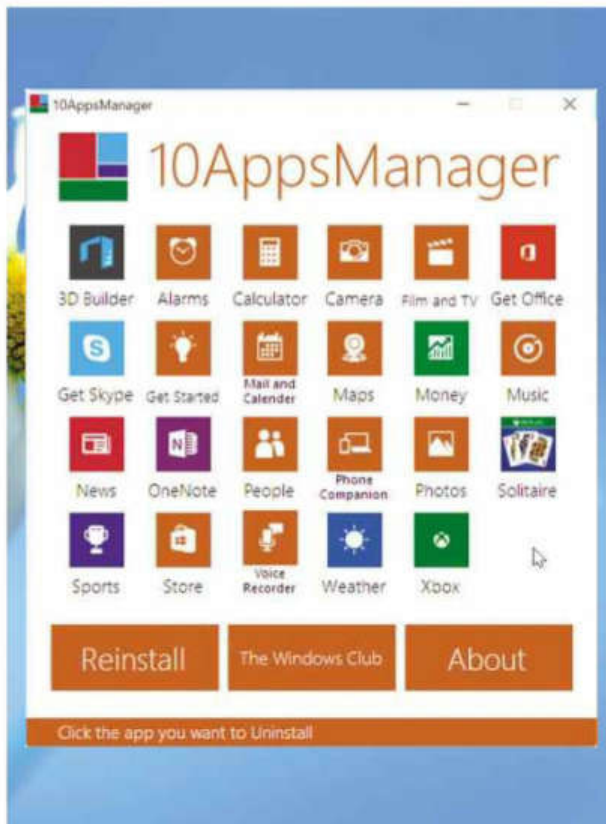
bit.ly/10apps381

Min requirements:

Windows 10

File size: 70KB

Windows 10 comes with a selection of apps pre-installed. These include Music, Photos, People, Store, News, Sports and Alarms. There are also several apps you might not want, such as Get Started, Get Skype, 3D Builder and Money. This free single-screen program lets you remove any unwanted stock apps. Simply click an item to uninstall it. If you change your mind, clicking the Reinstall button explains how to get apps back.



SCREEN-CAPTURE TOOL

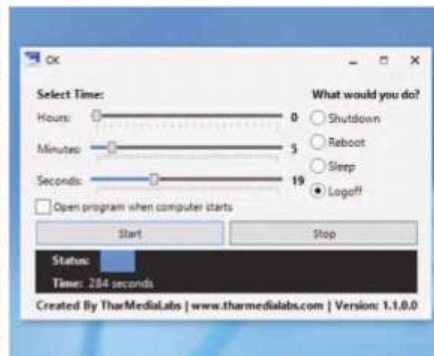
Snip

bit.ly/snip381

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 2.1MB

This Microsoft Garage project lets you capture anything on screen, add annotations and narration, and share the result in various ways, including as a link (files can be uploaded and stored on Microsoft's Mix site) or MP4 video. It's a work in progress, so new features are being added regularly, with recent additions including a highlighter tool and full-screen capture.



SYSTEM TOOL

SilencePC

bit.ly/silencepc381

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 11MB

SilencePC is a simple free program that lets you turn off your computer after a set time. Use the sliders to set the hours, minutes and seconds until shutdown, and then choose the action the program should take. It can shut down your PC, log off, reboot or put it to sleep. A timer shows how long you have remaining, and you can start or stop the process at any time.

New Windows 8 Apps

Yahoo Mail

bit.ly/yahoo381

Min requirements:

Windows 10

File size: 15.2MB

If you use Yahoo Mail, it's definitely worth installing this new, official app. It displays recent emails in a live tile and also alerts you to new messages via desktop and lock-screen notifications.



Translator 10 Beta

bit.ly/translate381

Min requirements:

Windows 8+/10

File size: 74.4MB

This app uses your device's camera, keyboard or microphone to translate one language into another. You can also download language packs to use the app offline.



Route Z

bit.ly/routez381

Min requirements:

Windows 8+/10

File size: 60MB

The zombie apocalypse is here, and you'll need to drive to survive in this fun action game. As well as escaping the zombie hordes, you need to collect fuel and armour.



SYSTEM TOOL

SODAT Privacy Protection Tool for Windows 10

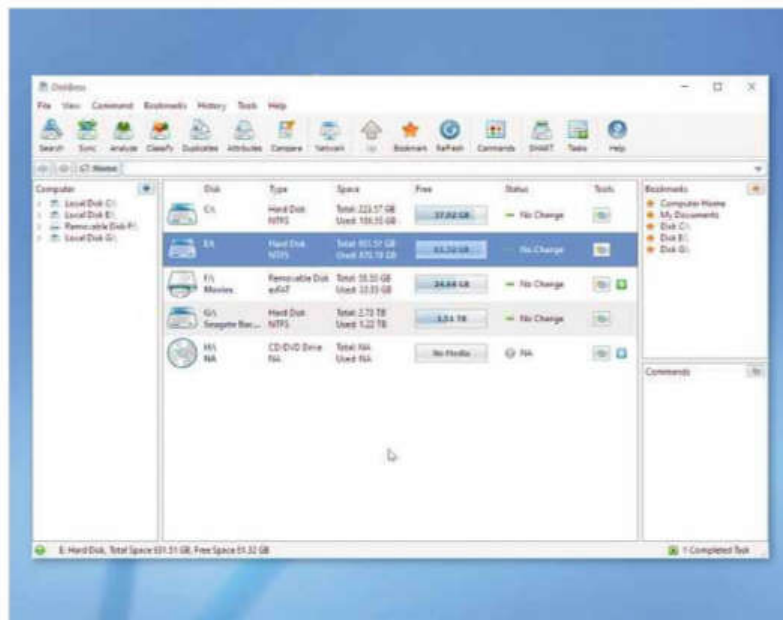
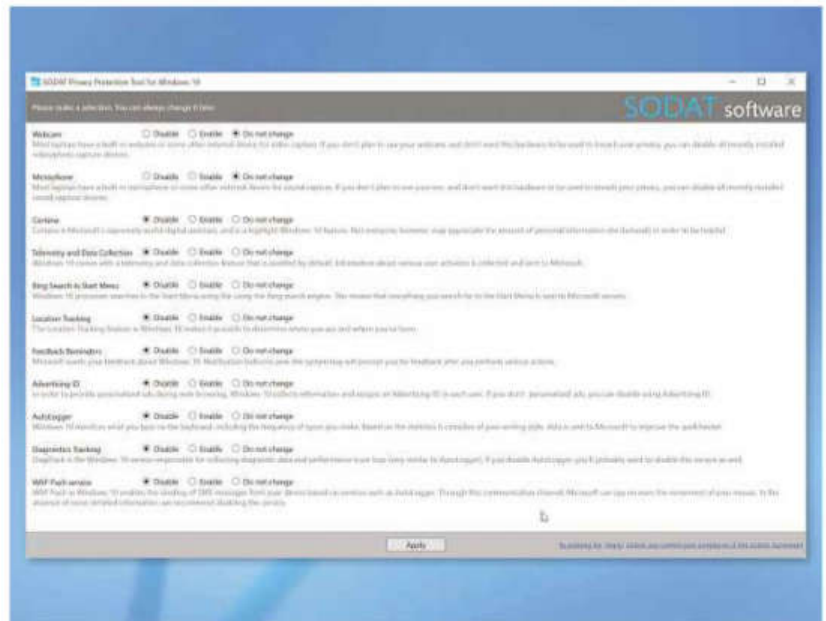
www.privacyprotectiontool.com

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 2.24MB

As we revealed in last issue's cover feature, Windows 10 spies on you, sending all sorts of usage data back to Microsoft. Fortunately, you can disable many of the snooping features in the operating system, provided you know where to look. SODAT is the latest in a long line of software developers producing solutions for managing Windows 10's privacy settings. Privacy Protection isn't the most advanced tool, but it covers all the major bases.

The software doesn't require installation and presents you with a list of options that you can enable or disable, including Webcam, Cortana, Location Tracking and Advertising ID.



DATA MANAGER

DiskBoss 6

www.diskboss.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6.2MB

If you're worried about the current state of your hard drive, this program offers a wide selection of tools that can tell you more about it. DiskBoss can show you how much space you have remaining on each disk, identify space hogs, sync content between folders, find files, find duplicates, bookmark locations and display a drive's SMART (Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology) status. You can benchmark your drive, change its label and more.

The latest version of DiskBoss improves its support for Windows 10 and adds the ability to compare directories, detect all file system changes and export reports to a number of standard formats. There are 32- and 64-bit versions available.

GADGET INTSTALLER

8GadgetPack 15

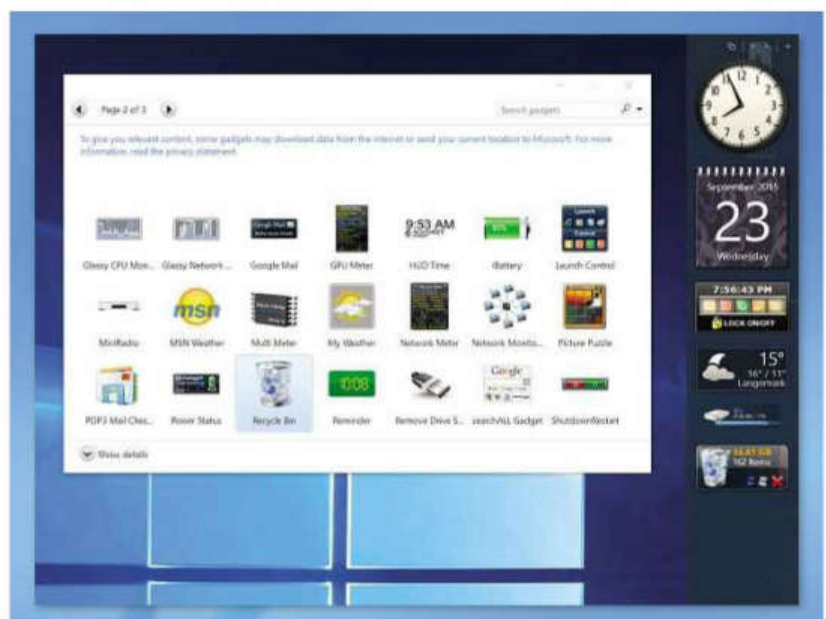
8gadgetpack.net

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 20.6MB

One of the most useful features in Windows 7 is the ability to add floating 'gadgets' (widgets) to your Desktop. Options available include a clock, a calendar, system monitors, app launchers and many more. Microsoft removed this feature from Windows 8 onwards, but if you're missing it, you can get it back by installing 8GadgetPack. There are more than 50 gadgets available to choose from and a sidebar to store them in.

The latest version of 8GadgetPack 15 improves Windows 10 compatibility and changes the look of the icons and sidebar to better fit in with the design of Microsoft's new operating system. Certain gadgets can now be displayed in high resolution, too.



Don't install...

TriDNet

bit.ly/trid381

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/8/10

File size: 32KB

TriDNet isn't a bad program, and it's useful for identifying unknown files, but it's far from user-friendly. First off, you need to download and extract a separate RAR file set of definitions and have the .NET framework installed. While it's efficient at detecting thousands of different file types, it doesn't tell you how to open them.



...Install this instead

OpenWith Enhanced

bit.ly/openwith381

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/8/10

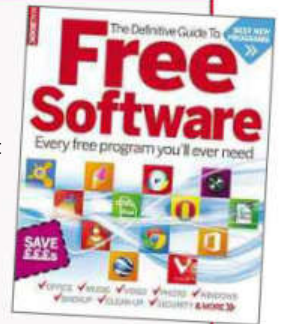
File size: 469KB

OpenWith Enhanced is a superior version of the built-in Open With feature in Windows. Once installed, right-click any file you can't open and select Open With, Choose Default Program. The program will check its online database for applications that have successfully opened that type of file and highlight any you've already installed. If you choose a non-installed one, you'll be redirected to its official website to download it. Once you've chosen the right software, select 'Always use the selected program to open this kind of file' for future instances.



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- Tweak your browser to unlock hidden features
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UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



BROWSER

Firefox 41

www.getfirefox.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 40.6MB

The latest version of Mozilla's browser adds the ability to set a profile picture for your Firefox account and introduces instant messaging to Firefox Hello, the built-in communications tool. Security has also been tightened. See page 7 for more information.



VIDEO EDITOR

VSDC Free Video Editor 3.3.0

bit.ly/vsdc381

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 29.4MB

VSDC's powerful program lets you edit your videos into home movies for free. The updated version introduces tweaks to the interface to make it easier to use, and adds improvements to the audio and video tools. Additional languages have been added, too.



SYSTEM TOOL

WinUtilities Free 11.45

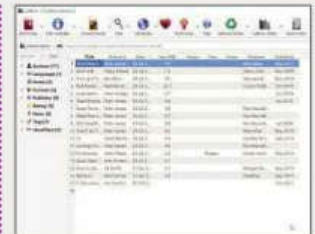
hi.ylcomputing.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6.1MB

This free tweaking suite repairs, optimises and protects your PC. The new version adds a number of general enhancements and bug fixes, along with updates to the Process Security database and language files. Note that the letter after the 'y' in the web address is a lowercase 'l'.



EBOOK MANAGER

Calibre 2.38

calibre-ebook.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 and Mac OS X

File size: 67.6MB

The latest version of the popular ebook manager and viewer gains support for the new Kobo Touch 2 ebook reader. It also adds more tools to edit the books you import into Calibre. There are two new icon themes and various bugs have been fixed. ■

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Preview social links before you open them

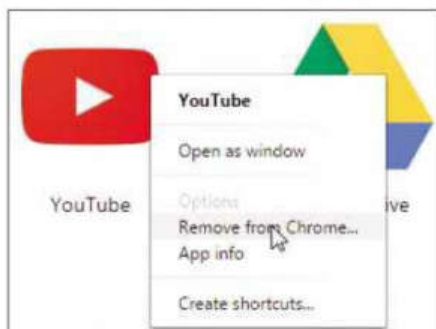
Don't waste time opening links that don't live up to their "you have to see this!" promise; install the brilliant HoverCards for Chrome (bit.ly/hover381) to see what to expect before you click. This usefully shows you previews of content on YouTube, Reddit, Twitter, SoundCloud and more when you hover your mouse over links, saving you opening a new tab and spending valuable seconds viewing or listening to something of no interest. What's more, if you click the link in the preview window, it opens the HoverCards sidebar, which displays useful information such as how many times the content has been shared on other social sites and what people are saying about it. Unlike similar extensions, it doesn't pop up annoyingly as you move your mouse across a web page; you need to hover for at least a second before it springs into action.



Stop YouTube blocking your ad blocker

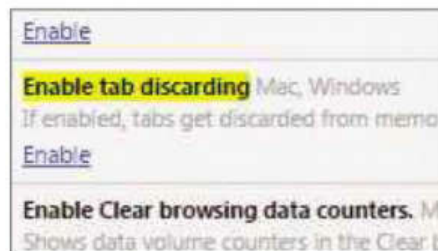
As we reported in our news section last issue, many YouTube users have discovered that their ad blockers, including Adblock Plus and uBlock Origin, are no longer working on the site, which prevents them from skipping the lengthy adverts that run before some of the videos. If you're experiencing this problem, there's a simple workaround you can try in Chrome, which involves removing the YouTube app that's affecting how your ad blocker works.

To do this, type `chrome:apps` into the address bar and press Enter to see all your installed apps. Right-click the YouTube app, select 'Remove from Chrome' and restart the browser. You should now find that ads on YouTube videos are automatically blocked or can at least be skipped.



Discard idle tabs to preserve memory

For all its benefits, Chrome is one of the biggest resource hogs on your PC, especially because it uses a different ‘process’, and therefore additional memory, for every browser tab and extension you have open. Happily, Google is finally addressing this problem in the latest version of the browser, which includes an option to discard tabs automatically when you’re running low on system memory. As is often the case with Chrome’s most useful new features, the option is currently an ‘experimental’ one that you’ll need to turn on manually.



Type `chrome:flags` into the address bar, press Enter and find the entry 'Enable tab discarding'. Click the Enable button, relaunch Chrome and, when you start to run out of memory, the contents of any idle tabs will be discarded. To restore them, just click the relevant tab to reload the page.

Jump to the relevant part of an online article

If you've ever been bogged down by a long online article that strays way off topic, you'll appreciate a new Chrome extension called Twinword Finder (www.twinword.com/finder). Like an advanced version of pressing Ctrl+F to find all instances of a word on a page, this add-on lets you enter a search term to jump directly to the relevant parts of the article, thereby bypassing the waffle. For example, if you search for flower in the Wikipedia entry for perfume, it will highlight sections that mention plants, leaves, petals and so on, but not parts that deal with history, terminology and chemicals (see screen grab, below). Because it relies on related keywords, Twinword Finder doesn't always work perfectly, but it certainly saves you a lot of skimming.



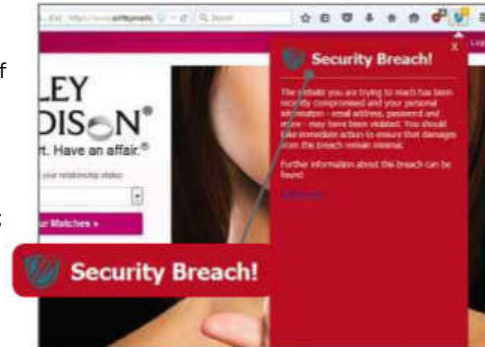
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



FIREFOX

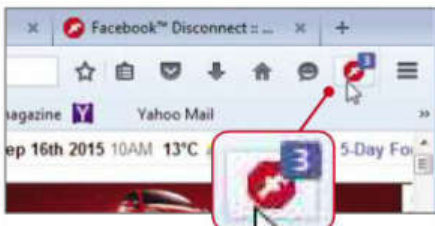
Get warnings about dangerous sites

Barely a week goes by without another big website being hacked, which makes it hard to keep track of all the security breaches. To stay safe online, it's worth installing Cyscon Security Shield (bit.ly/cyscon381), which alerts you if the site you're visiting has been hacked; infected by Trojans and other malware; or is likely to steal your personal data. It does so by displaying an unmistakable red warning in your browser, which explains why the site poses a security threat and lets you click the 'Back to Safety' button to close it. The "data to detect the bad guys" is provided by security company Cyscon and its Phish Killer anti-phishing campaign. It's a great second line of defence and is unobtrusive on harmless sites.



Stop Facebook advertisers following you

One of the worst things about Facebook is that even when you're not using the site, it follows your movements around the web so that companies can target you with adverts. Facebook Disconnect (bit.ly/facebook381) stops this snooping by blocking requests from third-party sites to your Facebook account, while still allowing you to use the social network. The add-on even shows you the number of trackers it's blocked on the current page, so you can see the extent of the problem. Facebook Disconnect uses very little memory – certainly much less than a full-on ad blocker – and you can toggle it on and off by clicking its toolbar button.



Close the current tab by pressing Delete

We love a good keyboard shortcut and they don't come much simpler than the one added to Firefox by Delete Tab (bit.ly/delete381). It lets you close the tab

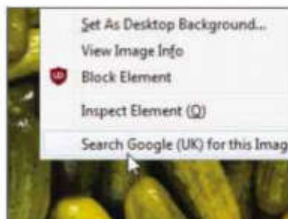


you're currently viewing simply by pressing the Delete or Del key on your keyboard. This is especially useful if you want

to hide the page you're looking at from somebody who's just walked up behind you. Once the coast is clear, you can reopen the tab by pressing Ctrl+Shift+T. Sadly, the add-on only works when the live tab is on the far left of your browser, but it's still a handy shortcut to have at your disposal.

Find a better quality version of an image

If you've found a great photo, but it's too small to print or share, then you need the unofficial Google Images (UK) add-on (bit.ly/images381), which lets you right-click the picture and select 'Search Google (UK) for this Image' to find larger, better quality and alternative versions of the shot.



OTHER BROWSERS

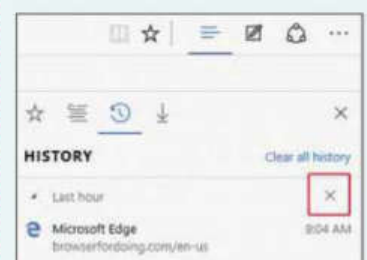
Password-protect your browser

Don't let other people in your home or workplace use your browser without your permission, mess up your settings and befoul your history with dodgy sites. Instead, install 'Set password for your browser' (bit.ly/password381) to lock Opera using the password of your choice. The unauthorised user will be prompted to enter this login when they try to launch the browser; if they can't, the program will close. The add-on is also available for Chrome from bit.ly/passwordchrome381.



Delete your history in Edge

Knowing how to cover your tracks is essential in any browser, so here's how to manage your browsing history in Microsoft Edge. Either press Ctrl+H or click the Hub button (the one with three horizontal lines), then the clock icon to open your History. Here, you can choose to 'Clear all history' or just delete specific entries. Alternatively, select an option from the drop-down menu such as 'Last hour', 'Last day' or Older and click the 'x' on the right-hand side to delete all pages within that timeframe.





Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

PRODUCTIVITY

Google Keep

bit.ly/keep381

Min requirements: iOS 8, Android 4.0

Size: 28MB

Google's brilliant note-taking app has been available to Android users since 2013 and it's now finally available on iOS, too. Everything you tell Keep to save is stored in the cloud, which means there's little risk of losing your notes and you'll always have an up-to-date record synced across all your devices.

The problem with many organisation tools is that it's difficult to retrieve entries you wrote in the not-so-distant past, but Keep lets you add labels and colours to your notes to make them easier to sort and find at a glance. For each entry, you can write continuous text or select the 'Show checkboxes' option to turn your notes into a functional to-do list. The app also lets you add images and create voice memos, which is handy when you don't have the time



or inclination to write something down. If you're worried you'll make a note and immediately forget about it, Keep also has a 'Remind me' feature that alerts you at the time or location of your choice. Like Gmail, its Archive option helps you to tidy away old notes without deleting anything.

We've always loved Keep and now that it's been made available on iOS, we're pleased that you can finally sync your notes and to-do lists between Apple and Android devices.



Our rating



NEW



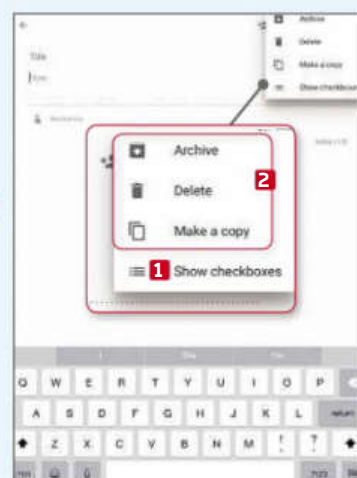
MINI WORKSHOP

Create a note using Google Keep

1 Open Keep and sign into your Google account. Tap 'Take a note' **1** or use the shortcuts to create a to-do list, **2**, take a photo **3** or create a voice memo. **4** From the note-taking screen, you can change the entry's colour or add a label using the appropriate icons.



2 If you made a standard note, you can still turn it into a to-do list by tapping the menu button and selecting 'Show checkboxes'. **1** The menu also contains options to Archive, Delete or 'Make a copy' of your note. **2**



3 To share an entry, **1** tap the share icon and enter the email address of the contact who you want to share it with. To set a reminder, select 'Remind me' **2** and choose the date and time or location for when you want to receive an alert.



This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps for Android, iOS and Windows phones and tablets, and smart TVs

TOOL

Move to iOS

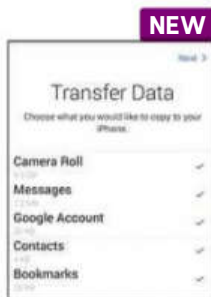
bit.ly/movetoios381

Min requirements:

Android 4.0

Size: 2.6MB

Apple's new app, which makes it easier to move your data to a new iOS device, has outraged reviewers on the Google Play Store who feel that the company is shamelessly poaching Android users. But if you've bought a new iPhone or iPad, it's surely a good thing that you can move your photos, contacts and messages to the new device without much fuss, and we don't believe the app will factor heavily in your decision to choose one platform over the other. In the interest of remaining unbiased, however, there's advice on transferring your data at www.android.com/switch if you're thinking of moving from iOS to Android.



NEW



Our rating



VIDEO EDITING

Vhoto

bit.ly/vphoto381

Min requirements:

iOS 8

Size: 44MB

Vphoto featured in Best Free Apps of Issue 356 (bit.ly/webuser356) thanks to its ability to extract the best still images from your video clips. It has since been updated and now lets you create animated GIFs from clips. When you open the app, it asks whether you'd like to import a pre-existing video or shoot a new one before it identifies and lists the clip's 'highlights'. If you're making a GIF, you can trim the automatic selections and change their speed; or, if you're extracting an image, you can use the app's photo-editing tools. Vphoto then lets you save your creation or share it with friends.



UPDATED



Our rating



ROUND UP | Quick bites

Spotify Music

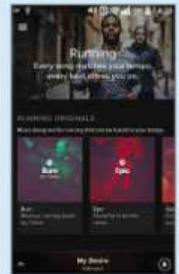
bit.ly/spotify381

Min requirements:

Android (varies with device), iOS 7

Size: Varies with device

Spotify's Running feature selects tracks with a tempo to match your pace, to motivate you to keep going. It was first launched on iOS and is now available on Android, too. The feature works on the Free version of the app, but you'll have to put up with adverts.



Receipt Tracker

bit.ly/receipt381

Min requirements:

Windows Phone

Size: 6.53MB

Developed by Microsoft Garage, this expense-tracking app uses Optical Character Recognition to extract information from your receipts so you can sort them by category and share them via email.



WHA by Work Hard Anywhere

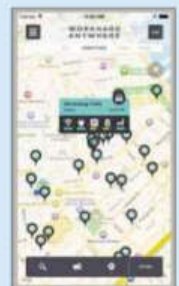
bit.ly/workhardanywhere381

Min requirements:

iOS 7

Size: 15.1 MB

Laptops and smartphones make it easy to work on the move, but it's not always so straightforward finding a suitable work space. WHA finds you locations all over the world that provide a reliable Wi-Fi connection along with a mains point you can plug into.



ENVIRONMENT

Plume Air Report

bit.ly/plume381

Min requirements:

Android 4.0, iOS 7

Size: 39MB

Along with overcrowding and traffic jams, one of the downsides to living and working in a city is the poor air quality. With this handy new app, you can check the latest air reports for your city, so you know the quality of the air that you're breathing and understand if there's any risk to your health. Plume covers 19 cities across the UK (as well as many more around the world) and its simple interface lets you quickly see the current pollution levels and compare them to the annual averages. By swiping right, it's also possible to check the levels of specific pollutants including ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. By default, the app sends pollution alerts and there are also helpful shortcuts to check if the current conditions are safe for outdoor activities.



NEW



Our rating



TV

BBC iPlayer for iOS

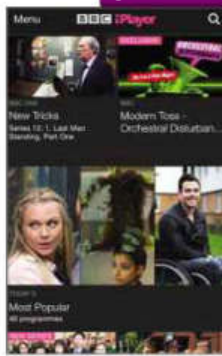
bit.ly/iplayerios381

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 28.1 MB

BBC iPlayer has received a significant update that takes advantage of iOS9's picture-in-picture viewing to let you use other apps while you catch up on BBC content. Unfortunately the feature only works on newer iPads, but using it is simply a matter of pressing the Home button during playback. iPlayer for Android has also had a big update, introducing My Programmes – a menu that helps you to find your favourite programmes and carry on watching where you left off. To use the Watching and Favourites lists, you'll need to sign in or register an account with the app. For more info about the BBC's recently launched Mobile iPlayer beta programme for Android, see opposite page.

UPDATED



Our rating



TRAVEL

Tripomatic Trip Planner

bit.ly/tripomatic381

Min requirements: Android 4.0

Size: 14 MB

Tripomatic helps you get the most out of any trip by letting you explore the top attractions in more than 150 countries around the world. By simply tapping the plus-sign icon, you can create a new trip and start browsing the best sights, tours and places to eat in the towns or cities you plan to visit.

For each entry, there's loads of helpful info including advice on how long you'll need to put aside for the activity and the contact details for making a booking. Once you've found something you like, Tripomatic lets you add it to your itinerary, which shows the weather forecast for each day and also maps the time and distance between attractions.

UPDATED



Our rating



5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

TOOL

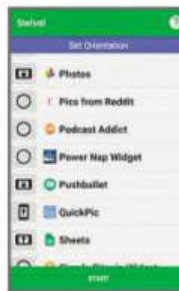
Swivel

bit.ly/swivel381

Min requirements: Android 4.0

Size: 1.1 MB **Price:** 77p

Android's built-in rotation lock is fairly limited in terms of functionality but, using this handy, lightweight tool, you can set a custom orientation for each app on your device, be it portrait, landscape or auto.



REFERENCE

Wikilinks 3

bit.ly/wikilinks381

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 20.2 MB **Price:** £2.49

Wikilinks 3 is a revolutionary Wikipedia reader that offers advanced features including the option to visually rediscover your movements between articles. It also integrates YouTube into the encyclopaedia, so that you can watch relevant videos without leaving the app.



PROGRAMMING

Javvy

bit.ly/javvy381

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3, iOS 7

Size: 15 MB

Price: Free (with in-app purchases)

Javvy includes more than 150 bite-sized tutorials to help you learn Java, still the world's most popular programming language. Two chapters come free with the app, but you'll need to spend £1.49 to unlock the remaining nine.

TOOL

Launch Centre Pro

bit.ly/launch381

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 40.2 MB **Price:** £3.99

Launch Centre Pro speeds up everyday tasks by providing you with shortcuts for specific actions, such as calling a loved one or tweeting your last photo. The app's widget makes it possible to access the shortcuts quickly from any screen.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera+ Free (with in-app purchases)

bit.ly/camera381

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 66.1 MB

Price: Free (with in-app purchases)

Camera+ Free is already more powerful than the iOS Camera app and, for a mere £2.29, you can unlock all its premium features including manual shooting and advanced editing.



Swivel



Wikilinks 3



Javvy



Launch Centre Pro



Camera + Free



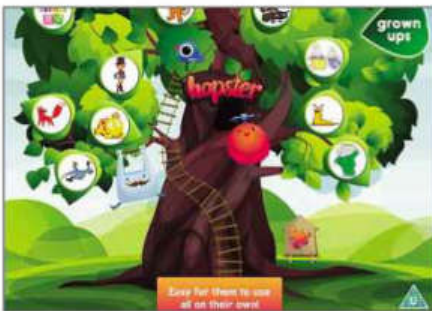


Best New TV Apps

KIDS TV

Hopster TV and Learning Gamesbit.ly/hopster381**Min requirements:** Android 4.2, iOS 6**Size:** 149MB (Android), 570MB (iOS)

The TV service for kids aged between two and six has been available on iOS for ages, and now it's finally available for Android families to enjoy. Hopster's ad-free, high-quality programming includes popular pre-school series such as *Bob the Builder*, *Thomas & Friends* and *Paddington Bear*. After watching an episode, your little 'uns can play fun learning games based on characters and themes from the show, to make viewing less passive. These involve matching shapes and colours, tracing letters and learning phonics, in an attractive interface that's designed for your toddlers' little fingers. Hopster costs £3.99 per month, after a seven-day free trial, and is planning to introduce the option to download shows soon.



FILM & TV

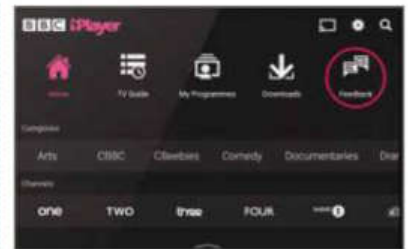
IMDb Movies & TVbit.ly/imdb381**Min requirements:** Android (varies with device), iOS 8**Size:** 21.1MB

The Android app for the Internet Movie Database isn't without its flaws – we particularly hate the clunky message boards – but this update fixes a few bugs to improve performance and adds a Top 250 of TV shows, equivalent to the service's similar list for movies. This uses votes from IMDb users to determine the best TV programmes of all time. The feature isn't yet available on the IMDb website (as far as we can see), so it's currently exclusive to Android and is labelled 'beta'. There's a pleasant mix of UK and US shows, including David Attenborough's *Planet Earth*, *Game of Thrones*, *Doctor Who*, *I Love Lucy* and even, somewhat unexpectedly, the saucy wartime sitcom *'Allo 'Allo*.

TV

BBC iPlayer for Androidbit.ly/iplayer381**Min requirements:** Android 4.1**Size:** 25MB

How would you like to help develop the next version of the BBC iPlayer? The Beeb is now recruiting volunteers to test the Android app through its new Mobile iPlayer beta programme. Just visit the link above to become a tester, then download the beta app to play around with it. It offers improvements to video playback and an integrated video player for catch-up shows that won't require the separate BBC Media Player app (although, you still need this installed "for now"). You can then report problems and share your views by tapping the Feedback option in the app. You need to be running Android Jellybean or better, and you can opt out of the programme to return to the stable iPlayer app.

**Don't install...****SD Cleaner**bit.ly/sdcleaner381

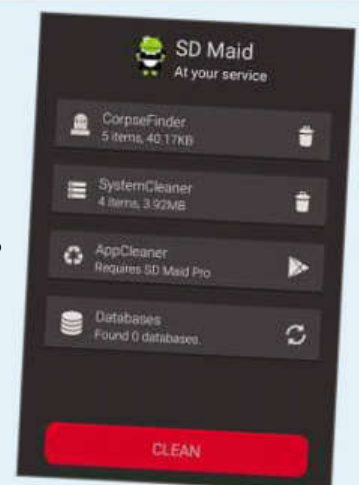
If your SD card is brimming over with junk, don't use this app to clean it or you could end up losing some important files. What else are you supposed to make of the warning to "be careful with your music, pictures, video", and



of the reviews that range from the obviously fake ("Wow, best app I ever had!") to the brutally honest ("Crap. Does nothing but freezes")? Not only is it unreliable, but it's also very confusing to use.

...Install this instead**SD Maid**bit.ly/sdmaid381**Min requirements:** Android (varies with device)**Size:** Varies with device

There are plenty of tools that clean up your Android device, but SD Maid is also designed to deal with the clutter that accumulates on your SD card. It uses a charmingly named tool called CorpseFinder to seek out the detritus left behind by other apps, and lets you remove junk with a single tap. It also offers several other useful features including a file explorer that shows all the files stored on your card and a search tool that displays the biggest files in order of size. Although some features are only available in the paid-for version, we love SD Maid's friendly interface and ability to carry out speedy and thorough clean-ups. ■





FAQ

Everything you need to know about the most interesting new technology trends and events

The death of Flash

Flash is no longer the darling of the internet and is increasingly being seen as the enemy by many web companies. **David Crookes** explains why Flash is finished



What's happened?

Flash, the software that's used to create and deliver online videos, games and adverts through a browser, has had a torrid time of late. Various technology companies have been warning people against using it, with some browser makers going a step further and blocking it altogether. Many people believe that the final nails are now being hammered into Flash's coffin.

Which companies are against Flash?

YouTube led the way in January this year, axing Flash in favour of its open-source rival HTML5. In July, Facebook's newly appointed security chief Alex Stamos posted a damning tweet which said: "It is time for Adobe to announce the end-of-life date for Flash". Mozilla then temporarily blocked Flash in its Firefox browser and advised users not to activate it again unless they were on sites that they totally trusted. Google and Amazon have also given Flash a kicking by discouraging advertisers from using it.



Facebook's security chief has told Adobe to ditch Flash for good



Adobe releases regular patches to solve security problems with Flash

Wow. What has Flash done wrong?

Some companies say that Flash is a power-hog, so disabling it optimises battery life on phones and makes web pages load faster on both desktop and mobile. But the bigger concern is Flash's poor security and stability. The US website Computerworld.com counted a staggering 164 Flash bugs in 2015 alone.

What security problems does Flash have now?

This summer, 400GB-worth of documents were stolen from the servers of a controversial Italian cyber-surveillance company called Hacking Team. As well as detailing vulnerabilities of

other systems, the files spelt out a security flaw in Flash that would allow hackers to gain access to people's computers. It was soon seized upon by malware writers as a means of stealing data, and the first of a new crop of Flash exploits emerged within 24 hours.

What has Adobe done to tackle these threats?

Adobe was – and usually is – quick off the mark to issue patches that addressed the exploits. But by then a large number of threats exploiting the security flaw had already been unleashed and users who had not patched their version of Flash were left vulnerable. Adobe is a victim in this, but the event has caused an increased loss of confidence in the product.

Is this why Google has blocked Flash adverts?

Strangely not. Google said at the beginning of September that it was going to prevent the automatic playing of Flash-based adverts in Chrome to enable the faster loading of websites and to preserve battery life. The ads will now only run if you click them; otherwise they will remain frozen. This is significant because more than half of all browsing is done through Chrome these days.

And what has Amazon done?

Amazon is no longer accepting Flash for the rendering of display ads on its website. It says this is in response to browser updates that limit Flash's ad-display capabilities. The last thing

Amazon wants is for its customers to experience missing elements because their browser settings have blocked them.

So will it reduce the number of ads I see?

Yes and no. According to Advertising Age (bit.ly/adage381), around 84 per cent of banner ads still use Adobe's technology so, in the short term, a move away from Flash will have a big impact. But in the long term, advertisers will probably abandon Flash in favour of HTML5 (indeed, Advertising Age advises companies to create Desktop ads in HTML5).

Any Flash adverts that use Google's AdWords system will not be affected because AdWords now automatically converts Flash ads to HTML5.

Will blocking Flash affect my online experience?

If you'd asked that question a few years ago, we'd have said that removing Flash would be akin to reading a newspaper with lots of stories cut out of it. But now, fewer and fewer websites are using Flash (figures show 10.3 per cent) and the move away from the plug-in has been going on for some time.

Back in April 2010, Apple boss Steve Jobs wrote a long blog post explaining why Flash could not be viewed on an iOS device. Since then, many web designers who feared losing visitors have reconfigured their sites to be Flash-less.

Why didn't Apple like Flash?

Steve Jobs said he didn't like Adobe making Flash a closed system (which is ironic, because that's exactly what most Apple products are). He said Apple preferred to use JavaScript, CSS and HTML5. He also said that Flash didn't perform well on mobile devices, had security issues and leached the battery life of tablets and phones. Jobs concluded that Flash was of the "PC era" and not suited to the mobile age.

But don't web users get a say?

No, you just shut up! Only joking, but if Occupy Flash (occupyflash.org) is anything to go by, some people feel very strongly about ridding the world of the plug-in. The group calls it a "fossil" and states that the tech is "holding back the web". Then again, Adobe itself has for a long time recognised the direction in which the online world is going; it ditched support for Flash Player in mobile browsers in 2011.



Occupy Flash says Flash holds back the web and must be killed off

Is HTML5 a safer bet, then?

In a word, yes. HTML5 is open, it works well on mobile devices and it uses the language of the modern web. It's also more secure than Flash and is supported by more companies. In 2014, companies including AOL, Condé Nast, Google, the New York Times and Forbes put their names to a letter written by the Interactive Advertising Bureau. It called on marketers to abandon Flash and use HTML5 for their mobile advertisements, dubbing the latter the "one open, industry-standard, universal format".

What about all those Flash games, though?

It's true that lots of great games have been written in Flash and that denying access to them cuts off great swathes of gaming archives. But the number of HTML5 games has risen massively – you can check out some of the best ones at html5games.com and www.kongregate.com/html5-games.



Lots of online games are now written in HTML5 rather than Flash

So what should I be doing?

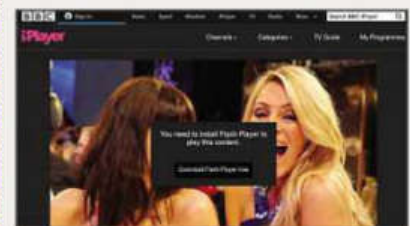
If you want to continue to use Flash, make sure you have the latest version and that you patch it to stay safe from the countless exploits. If not, you should disable Flash in your browser (see instructions on page 48 of our last issue). Otherwise, use the official uninstallers for PC at bit.ly/flashpc381 and Mac at bit.ly/flashmac381.

DON'T DITCH FLASH

Your access to several popular sites and services will be affected if you abandon Flash. Here are three you'll have to live without

BBC iPlayer

The Beeb claimed five years ago that Flash "currently happens to be most efficient way to deliver a high quality experience to the broadest possible audience" and it continues to use it today (the fool!). However, iPlayer uses an HTML5-responsive design and works fine on iOS and Android without Flash.



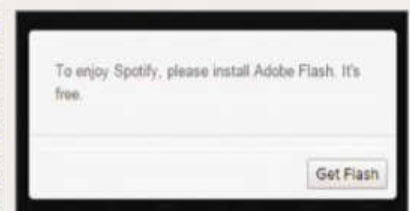
Farmville 2

Zynga, which makes FarmVille 2, has already been showing players how to activate Flash Player if it has been blocked by their browser. Many browser-based games still rely on Adobe's technology but the numbers are falling. Developers seem less likely to use Flash in the future, given the current shift away.



Spotify

If you want to use Spotify in your browser and you don't have Flash, then you're out of luck. Although a helpful message pops up prompting you to install it and saying it is free to do so, using the app version on your Desktop or mobile device is a much better way for music lovers to get around the restriction.

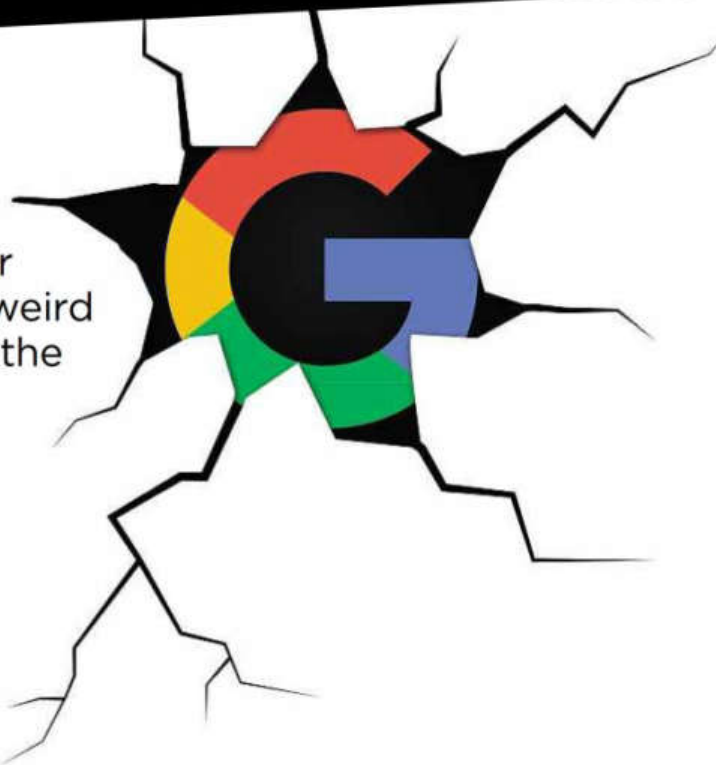


COVER
FEATURE

The New Google

EXPOSED

Google's ambitions now stretch way beyond the web into every area of our lives. **Robert Irvine** looks at its latest weird and wonderful ideas to find out what the company wants with your data now



Billions of us now rely on Google to get us online via Chrome, find us info through its search engine and guide us from A to B using Google Maps. And yet, without our data, Google would be worthless. Our information, freely given, powers and shapes everything the company does, helping it to improve its tools and make heaps of money from advertising. Google's biggest product isn't search or YouTube or Android, but you.

Google's recent transformation into Alphabet (see

our FAQ in Issue 379) confirmed that the company is no longer merely interested in ruling the web, but wants to infiltrate every area of our lives, from our cars and homes to our health and dreams, merrily gathering and using our data along the way. In this feature, we take a closer look at nine of its current projects – or 'moonshots' as Google prefers to call its barmier ideas – to find out if they're really intended to improve our lives or if there is a more sinister purpose involved.

Sidewalk Labs

www.sidewalkinc.com

What is it?

According to Larry Page (bit.ly/larry381), co-founder of Google and now Alphabet CEO, the Sidewalk Labs project will focus “on improving city life for

everyone by developing and incubating urban technologies to address issues like cost of living, efficient transportation and energy usage”.

He indicated that Sidewalk Labs will tackle the increasing interconnectedness of modern cities. Referencing the pioneering work done by cities across the world, such as

developing dashboards to visualise traffic patterns and building tools for residents to evaluate city services, he stressed the need to treat the city not as a series of services, but as a linked entity.



How will it improve my life?

If you live in a city, you'll doubtless agree with Page's assertion that “a lot of urban challenges are interrelated” – for example, if you don't live near a late-night takeaway, then you can't buy a kebab on your way home from the pub. Or, more seriously, “availability of transportation affects where people choose to live, which affects housing prices, which affects quality of life”. Sidewalk Labs will allow Google to create a big-picture view of the many factors that affect city life, and “develop the technologies and partnerships you need to make a difference”.

What will it do with my data?

That's a good question, and Sidewalk Labs has already raised privacy concerns – Google watches what we do



Google envisions the city as a linked entity with interrelated challenges



Sidewalk Labs takes Google off the web and puts it on the streets

on the web, and now it wants to watch us on the street, too. And Page's use of the word ‘partnerships’ suggests that targeted advertising could soon be as much a feature of cities as grimy pavements and graffiti.

The ‘cultural technologist’ Mara Belestini says she's concerned that “the role of a private commercial giant like Google in the collection and analysis of data that pertains to the public domain raises issues with regards to privacy, security and transparency. Citizens should have 100-per-cent knowledge with regard to what data is being collected and how this data can be accessed and used.”

Should I be worried?

Potentially, yes, although it's not yet clear exactly what data Sidewalk Labs will be collecting and how. The project will initially be based in New York, so we'll see how the denizens of the Big Apple take to being tracked by Google.

Baseline Study

research.google.com

What is it?

Baseline Study might not sound very exciting, but it's been described (by the *Wall Street Journal*, bit.ly/wall381) as Google's “most ambitious and difficult science project ever”, and addresses something that affects us all: the human body. It aims to help doctors predict the onset of diseases such as cancer and heart disease much earlier than is currently possible, and move medicine towards prevention rather than treatment.

This ‘moonshot’ began last year when Google's X Lab (see boxout on page 41) started collecting bodily

fluids including urine, blood, saliva and tears in a pilot study of 175 volunteers. In August this year, Google co-founder and Alphabet president Sergey Brin praised the life-sciences team that has been working on Baseline Study and other projects such as a cardiac and activity monitor, and a contact lens that monitors glucose levels in diabetics, and said it will be

spun off into a separate Alphabet company (bit.ly/sergey381).

How will it improve my life?

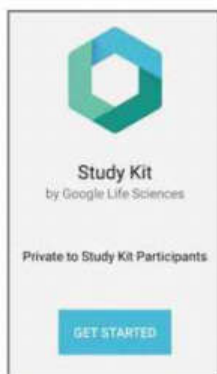
With hospital waiting lists longer than ever and the cost of pharmaceuticals rapidly rising (some cancer-drug firms are doubling the price for NHS patients), the work being carried out for Baseline Study could literally save your life. The life-sciences team, which includes software engineers, oncologists and optics experts, has already made several medical and scientific breakthroughs with the ultimate aim of transforming the way we detect, prevent and manage disease. It will do this by identifying ‘biomarkers’ or patterns that suggest evidence of disease, and by telling scientists the kinds of biological conditions that make someone a likely candidate for conditions such as high cholesterol.



Smart contact lenses are used to monitor glucose levels in volunteers

What will it do with my data?

Google says Baseline Study will collect data privately and anonymously, and it will only be used for medical purposes, not sold to insurance companies. Samples are collected by independent testing companies and stripped of any identifying details. This seems reassuring but the *WSJ* says Google is collecting a “staggering amount of information about its anonymous guinea pigs” (bit.ly/baseline381) to map each person's entire DNA sequence, and



Volunteers can share their data with Google using the StudyKit apps and add-on

Study involves a 'Study Kit' that lets volunteers submit data through Android and iOS apps, and a Chrome extension. These tools are now available through the respective stores, but you won't be able to use them until the study takes on more 'guinea pigs', possibly by the end of this year.

Should I be worried?

Participants may be slightly worried about what's being done with their data, but unless you recently dispatched a container of your urine to Google, there's no need to fret. In fact, the biggest concern is whether we'll see the implementation of Baseline Study's research in our lifetimes.

that of their parents, as well as "how they metabolise food, how their hearts beat, and their oxygen levels". Google says that its intention is "to make a contribution to science; not to generate a new product".

Following the initial research last year, the next stage in Baseline

Project Loon

www.google.com/loon

What is it?

Balloon-powered internet might sound like pie in the sky, but Google has been testing its helium-filled broadband providers since June 2013. Project Loon balloons float 12 miles above the Earth to provide an internet network from the edge of space. Layers of wind allow Google's scientists to move the balloons, which measure 15 x 12 metres wide when fully inflated, into position.

How will it improve my life?

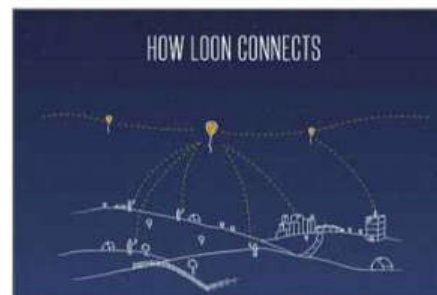
The aim of Project Loon is to deliver high-speed broadband to rural and remote areas, and to get people back online in areas hit by disasters. Initial tests were made on the South Island of New Zealand and the project recently expanded to Brazil, California and Sri Lanka. Sadly, areas of the UK with slow broadband, such as Romney Marsh in Kent, are likely to be low on Loon's list of priorities, but you can sign up to be a pilot tester at www.google.com/loon/where.

Former Microsoft boss Bill Gates has



Project Loon is bringing high-speed wireless internet to remote areas

expressed cynicism about Loon's life-changing potential: "When you're dying of malaria, I suppose you'll look up and see that balloon, and I'm not sure how it'll help you", he told Business Insider in 2013 (bit.ly/gates381). But maybe he's just jealous because he didn't think of it first.



Loon balloons form a floating internet network on the edge of space

WHICH COMPANIES MAKE UP ALPHABET?

Google is no more, at least not in the form we're used to. In its place is Alphabet, a conglomerate of companies previously under Google's control but now spun into separate entities under one umbrella company. Here are the main members at the time of writing

Boston Dynamics



Builder of advanced robots, most of which mimic animal-like behaviour, such as the frankly terrifying

BigDog (watch

it in action at bit.ly/bigdog381).

Google bought Boston Dynamics in December 2013, but it's currently unclear whether Alphabet will take control of Boston Dynamics or if it will remain a part of Google.

Calico

The California Life Company was the arm of Google concerned with

combating ageing and associated diseases. It was founded by Google and Arthur D Levinson in 2013. Calico is one of the main areas of interest for Sergey Brin and Larry Page. Interestingly, Levinson - the current CEO - is also chairman of Google's arch-nemesis, Apple.

Capital

A venture-capital fund, formerly called Google Capital, it focuses on companies in the late stage of growth, and only invests to make profit. If Alphabet starts swallowing smaller companies, it'll be doing it through Capital. A bit too 'corporate' to be of much interest to the rest of us, though.

Deep Mind

Now this is much more intriguing.

Alphabet

Deep Mind is Google's artificial intelligence and general-purpose algorithm-learning company. Founded in 2011, and bought by Google in 2014, the UK-based company has been hard at work behind closed doors. Beyond the hallucinatory Deep Dream project (deepdreamgenerator.com), which converts your images and videos into surreal artwork, it's largely a mystery what Dream Mind has been up to.



What will it do with my data?

Although conspiracy theorists may suspect that Google is using its balloons to suck up our data (or that of extraterrestrial web users) from space, there's no evidence that it's doing so (at least, not yet).

Should I be worried?

No, but last month, one of the Loon balloons crashed into the front yard of a family in Chino Hills, California (bit.ly/looncrash381). Nobody was hurt, only an "innocent" palm tree that took the brunt of the balloon.

Project Tango

bit.ly/tango.381

What is it?

Project Tango provides mobile devices such as tablets with the ability to navigate the world in the same way that we do as humans. By 'seeing' in 3D – by using two cameras, two computer-vision processors and integrated 'depth sensing' – Tango tablets are able to judge space and movement more accurately than standard devices, without using GPS or requiring a mobile signal.



Project Tango adds another dimension to tablets – the ability to 'see' in 3D

How will it improve my life?

Project Tango could prove very useful to people with sight problems, helping them to map their environment and get audio clues about their surroundings. On a broader level, it could be used to map your home so you know, for example, the correct dimensions for new furniture when you're shopping online or where to find particular products in high-street shops.

Several apps have already been created using the technology and UK developers can now buy a Tango kit for £256 from bit.ly/tango381. Google is also rumoured to be working with LG to produce consumer versions of Tango devices.

What will it do with my data?

Tango is designed to let "your virtual world interact with the real world in new

ways", which inevitably raises privacy concerns – do you really want Google to know the exact layout of your home? Especially when the data gathered by devices could be used for advertising purposes as well as depth-sensing ones.

Should I be worried?

Possibly. Tango's desire to "extract intelligence out of a scene" sounds slightly worrying, but it isn't yet clear exactly how much detail it can collect and what it will do with that information.

Android Auto

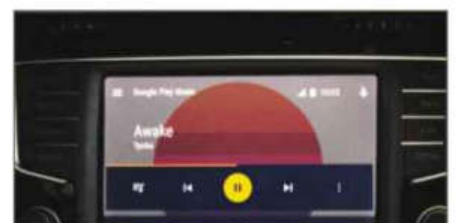
www.android.com/auto

What is it?

It may still be a few years until self-driving cars go on sale, but Android Auto has already got Google on the road. Several new cars, including models from Hyundai, Honda and Volkswagen, are equipped with the technology, which allows you to access content and control features on your Android device without touching it, so you keep your hands on the wheel. Android Auto uses a large, integrated dashboard screen, on which it displays apps including Google Maps, Play Music, Hangouts, Spotify and WhatsApp, as well as the Android Auto app itself.

How will it improve my life?

Although we're confident that *Web User* readers are far too sensible to use their phones while driving, Android Auto will



Android Auto lets you view data from your phone on your dashboard

Fiber

Google Fiber (note the spelling) is a US-only company, which is known mostly for delivering fibre-to-the-home 1Gbps broadband, and helping low-income homes connect to the internet with a free 5Mbps package.

Life Sciences

This company isn't about researching health, like Calico, but understanding living organisms and biosciences, perhaps with a mind to help fuel Calico developments. See our Baseline Study write-up for more about this team and its work.

Nest Labs

Google's home-automation and Internet-of-Things company will remain largely the same under Alphabet, with Tony Fadell remaining as CEO. Nest is known for creating a smart



thermostat, baby monitor and carbon-monoxide detector.

Ventures

This is another venture-capital arm of Alphabet but, unlike Capital, it invests mostly in start-ups. Ventures has always operated as a separate company to Google but many companies funded by Ventures have gone on to be acquired by the search giant.

X Lab



The top-secret research laboratory, where all the really cool

stuff at Google has traditionally happened, and will continue to do so at Alphabet. It's where Google Glass, the self-driving car and many other 'moonshots' were born, and we're excited to see what's coming next.

CHROMECAST 2

By the time you read this, details of the new Chromecast (www.google.co.uk/chromecast) will probably have been confirmed at Google's 29 September event, but our early press deadline means we can only speculate on the second version of the popular streaming dongle. Rumours suggest the updated device will look less like a USB memory stick and more like a key fob, and include new features that make it a closer rival to Apple TV.

Sources close to the project have suggested that the new model will have faster, 802.11ac Wi-Fi and a feature called Fast Play, which could either speed up buffering or 'pair' the Chromecast more quickly with phones, tablets and PCs. It will also have "background feed" capability, which could mean real-time integration with social-media accounts, as well as news and sport widgets.

Interestingly, it's rumoured that not only will Chromecast 2 let you listen to music on Spotify, but that support for the music-streaming service will be added to the original Chromecast – which is a surprise when you consider that Google has its own Play Music streaming service.

If we're wrong about all of the above, blame Google for the bad timing of its launch event!



The OnHub is Google's first router, built in partnership with TP-Link

traffic on your network", but merely gather data relevant to improving your Wi-Fi performance.

Should I be worried?

Nah. Several tech blogs have taken the OnHub to pieces to see if anything suspicious lurks inside, and found only lots of antennas, a speaker and other components listed by Google. (bit.ly/onhub381)

make it possible to use all your favourite tools from your device while keeping your concentration on the road. Naturally, your car will need to be compatible with Android Auto, and your phone will need to be running Android 5 (Lollipop) or later, but we expect the feature to be offered as standard in vehicles within the next couple of years.

What will it do with my data?

Other than knowing exactly where you go and sharing that information with Google, not a great deal more than your phone or tablet does at the moment. One of the downsides is that when you go offline, such as when you're driving through a tunnel, you won't be able to use your apps, apart from simply accessing any data they've cached.

Should I be worried?

No. Android Auto should hopefully reduce the number of road accidents rather than cause more. Google is keeping tight control over the apps that work with the system, so we're unlikely to get idiots watching Netflix on the dashboard as they speed up the M1!



Android Auto saves this couple from arguing about directions

OnHub

on.google.com/hub



What is it?

OnHub is Google's first Wi-Fi router, built in partnership with TP-Link, and it's smart in more than just its appearance. It supports the latest 802.11ac wireless protocol, which means it can deliver super-fast speeds of up to 1,900Mbps, and is designed to cater to the ever-increasing number of devices in the 'Internet of Things'.

How will it improve my life?

As more 'smart' objects become available for our homes – from heating, lighting and security systems to kitchen, health and entertainment appliances – the OnHub will serve as a conduit to ensure they all maintain reliable and speedy internet connections. It supports up to 128 devices at a time, works with your existing ISP and can be controlled via a 'Google On' app on your phone or tablet. Reviews of the OnHub, which give a price tag of \$199.99 (£128), have mostly been positive, but it hasn't yet been confirmed if it will be launched in the UK.

What will it do with my data?

By connecting to all your smart devices, you'd be forgiven for thinking the OnHub could be used to spy on every element of your life. However, Google insists that "the Google On app and your OnHub do not track the websites you visit or collect the content of any

Project Wing

bit.ly/wing381

What is it?

Is it a bird, is it a plane or is it Google's ongoing attempt to fly its own drones? Yes, it's the latter, although Wing briefly looked grounded after more than 80 per cent of the development team agreed that it had "the wrong design" (bit.ly/wrong381). Although this moonshot is essentially a rival to Amazon's Prime Air drone-delivery service (www.amazon.com/primeair), Google says it originated as an experiment to deliver defibrillators to people suffering from heart attacks, and to get to supplies to people in disaster zones.

How will it change my life?

Although Wing could still fulfill its potential as a robotic paramedic, the likely (and more commercial) benefit is that you'll be able to get products you order online the same day, without traffic or transport problems causing delays (only perhaps the odd bird).



The first Project Wing drone was scrapped for having "the wrong design"



"Where's my flipping package, Google?" asks a man holding on to his hat

If you run your own business, you can register your interest to get involved with the project at bit.ly/wing381.

What will it do with my data?

Nothing dodgy, we imagine, other than locate where you live so it can deliver your package. The original design for Project Wing was part helicopter, part plane, with a GPS unit in the nose and a camera in the tail, pointing towards the ground. Although these features could potentially be used for spying, it would be pretty obvious unless the latest (as yet unveiled) Wing incarnation is invisible!

Should I be worried?

The main concern with drones is the potential for accidents. X Lab chief, the improbably named Astro Teller, says Wing craft are likely to be operated by humans to avoid collisions, but drone deliveries still need to get the approval of aviation authorities.

surprising that it's taken Google so long to launch its own mobile network. Sort of, anyway, because Project Fi actually 'piggybacks' on existing 4G networks and Wi-Fi hotspots to give you high-speed data and voice calls wherever you go, without you needing to install additional apps.



Project Fi offers you secure connection to Wi-Fi hotspots

How will it improve my life?

Well, if you're already using a virtual mobile network such as GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile or Virgin Mobile, Project Fi is unlikely to revolutionise your life, especially because it's currently only available on Google's Nexus 6 phone and in certain areas. However, it's inevitable that Google will expand the service to include more devices and regions, and try to undercut its rivals. Plans currently cost from \$20 (£12.90) per month for unlimited calls and texts, plus an extra \$10 (£6.45) for mobile data access. Fi launched in the US earlier this year, but it isn't yet clear if or when it will reach the UK. If you own a Nexus 6, you can find out if Fi is available in your area and request an invite at fi.google.com/signup.

What will it do with my data?

Unusually, Fi has Google providing you with data rather than collecting it, and you'll only be billed for the amount of data you use. So if you pay \$10 for an extra gigabyte of data but only consume half of it, you'll get \$5 back.

Should I be worried?

Yes and no. Although Wi-Fi hotspots can prove a security risk, Google says on the Fi website that "your data is

secured through encryption. It's like your data has a private tunnel to drive through". However, Google has a history of "accidentally" collecting Wi-Fi data through its Street View cars, which may make you wary of trusting it with your actual Wi-Fi connection.

Brotli

bit.ly/brotli381



Google's new compression format is named after a small loaf

What is it?

It's Google's new, open-source compression algorithm. Brotli (which means 'small bread' in Swiss German) is big news because it could speed up the web by making fonts and images load much faster. According to Google: "we think that internet users' time is valuable, and that they shouldn't have to wait long for a web page to load".

How will it improve my life?

As well as loading pages faster, Brotli will reduce the amount of data and battery life they consume, saving you time, money and hassle. In theory, that is, because it relies on web designers using the compression algorithm to optimise their pages and on your browser supporting the format.

What will it do with my data?

Nothing. It will compress data in the pages you view. Keep up!

Should I be worried?

Only if you have a gluten intolerance. Google seems to have a penchant for naming compression formats after Swiss bakery products (Brotli's predecessor was Zopfli, a type of 'braided bread'). ■

Project Fi

fi.google.com

What is it?

As the provider of many popular mobile services – Search, Maps, YouTube and so on – it's perhaps



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on sale Wednesday 21 October 2015

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The 27 most amazing tweaks to improve any version of Windows



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We test the best new filters for iPhones and iPads

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Best privacy add-ons for browsers

Worried about advertisers and social networks tracking your movements on the web? **Wayne Williams** tests six tools that can help you block them



Privacy Badger | bit.ly/privbadger381 | ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

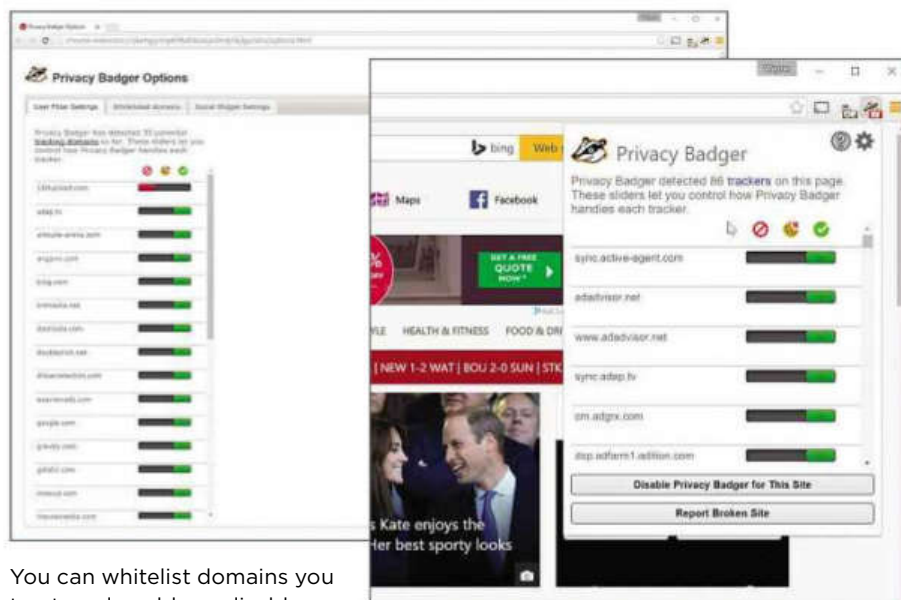
What we liked:

Privacy Badger is from the EFF (Electronic Frontier Foundation), a non-profit organisation that has 25 years' experience of defending civil liberties and privacy in the digital world.

Privacy Badger is available for Firefox and Chrome, and blocks thousands of spying ads and invisible trackers. It sits unobtrusively at the top of your browser looking for snooping elements, and automatically blocks any it detects. Clicking the icon displays a list of ad domains on the current site – sorted into those that track you and those that don't – with colour coded sliders next to each one. Initially, these sliders will all be green, showing that they are unblocked, but Privacy Badger will soon learn which to deny and which to allow, and take action accordingly. You can also choose to block domains manually – either fully or partially (the latter just prevents the use of cookies).

Social-networking buttons, which can be used to spy on your online movements, are replaced and marked on the web page, which is a great idea.

We also like the filter-settings page, which lets you choose what action to take with potential tracking domains.



You can whitelist domains you trust, and enable or disable social widget replacements. Privacy Badger can be disabled on any site, and you can report any sites that the add-on prevents from working.

How it can be improved:

There aren't a huge number of settings to tinker with. This makes it great for casual users, but a bit basic for anyone requiring greater control over what's allowed or disallowed. It would be useful, too, if you could simply click the

marker on a web page to re-enable a social widget that's been disabled.

OUR VERDICT

Trustworthy, accurate and easy to use, there's very little to complain about with Privacy Badger. It's an intelligent piece of software that only blocks domains after justifying that it needs to do so.

Disconnect Private Browsing | disconnect.me | ★★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★



What we liked:

Disconnect can prevent sites such as Facebook, Google and Twitter from tracking your activities and searches. Clicking its button in your browser displays the number of advertising, analytics, social and content requests that have been made, and lets you allow or block them. You can also whitelist or blacklist a site.

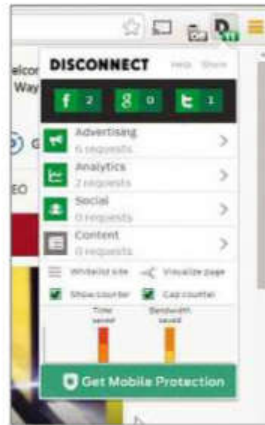
You can see at a glance how much time and bandwidth Disconnect has managed to save you, and the Visualise Page option displays a graph that shows which sites would have received your information if the add-on hadn't blocked them.

Hover your mouse over the central circle to see the full list of domains that are linked to the current site in some way. Clicking any of the links in the list will open that site in a new tab, so you can find out more about it. Circles shown with a halo are ones you've visited; circles without a halo are ones you haven't. Red sites are trackers,

which you can block or unblock by clicking them in the graph.

How it can be improved:

We'd prefer to have more control; you can turn features on or off, but there are no settings to tinker with. Also, certain advanced features are only available in the paid-for Premium edition.



OUR VERDICT

Disconnect does a great job and you get a sense of satisfaction seeing how much time and bandwidth the add-on has managed to save you by blocking trackers. The Visualise page is excellent.

Ghostery | www.ghostery.com | ★★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★



What we liked:

Ghostery is available for all the major browsers including Firefox, Chrome, Opera, Internet Explorer and Safari. As you browse the web, it identifies tracking elements on websites, such as web bugs, and lists the companies that have an interest in finding out where you go online. Clicking an entry provides information about the tracker, and you can block it or allow it on that site. You can temporarily pause all blocking or completely whitelist a site.

Ghostery has several settings to play around with, including the option to make certain blocked content 'click to play' (which is available in the Advanced section). This means you can quickly activate blocked content, such as a video player, if you need to use it.

How it can be improved:

Ghostery is unquestionably very good, but we're not keen on some of its recent additions. A new Consumer Messaging Platform that allows Ghostery to display promotional

messages in your browser is enabled by default. It can quickly be disabled under Options, Advanced but we'd prefer it to be opt-in.

Also, when you first install Ghostery, you'll be shown a survey asking for personal information, including employment status, age, sex and so on. You can easily close this tab and ignore the survey, but it would be better if it didn't open it in the first place.



OUR VERDICT

Ghostery is a very good privacy add-on with plenty of options and a configuration wizard that walks you through the setup. It would be better if it didn't automatically opt you into promotional messages and a survey, though.

BEST OF THE REST

Adblock Plus

adblockplus.org

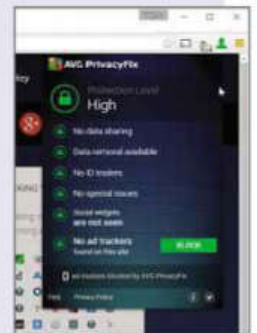
The popular Adblock Plus extension removes the majority of annoying adverts from websites; you just install it and browse as normal. However, if you take the time to choose and configure the filter list, it can also prevent web bugs and tracking scripts from recording your personal details as you browse the web.



AVG PrivacyFix

www.privacyfix.com

AVG PrivacyFix is a browser add-on for Firefox and Chrome that can check your privacy settings across various websites including Facebook, Twitter, Google and LinkedIn, and let you quickly make changes to them. If it finds potential weak areas, it will take you to the settings so you can make the required changes. It doesn't make the changes for you, but rather leaves things in your hands. For a bit of fun, the site estimates your worth to the major social sites.



AdBlock

getadblock.com

Not to be confused with Adblock Plus, this add on for Chrome, Firefox and Safari will block all adverts automatically, although you can choose to allow certain types, and whitelist your favourite YouTube channels. You can see at a glance just how many ads have been blocked to date. There are additional filter lists available that will allow it to block social media buttons and protect your privacy.



Make the web easier to read on your phone

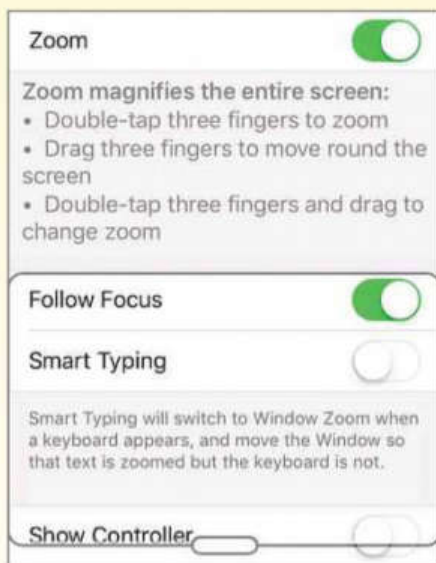


Mobile screens are bigger than ever, but it can still be difficult to read web content on your phone. Here, we explain how you can make everything more readable and reduce eye strain

Adjust your phone's zoom levels

You can use pinch gestures to adjust the size of the text you want to read on screen, but this can be fiddly and inaccurate, and it doesn't always work. It's a better idea to activate your phone's built-in zoom features to magnify and move around text, to make it easier to read.

In iOS, go to Settings, Accessibility, Zoom and flick the Zoom switch to On. This will display an on-screen magnifier that you can control using specific gestures, such as double-tapping or dragging with three fingers. You can also set the maximum zoom level.

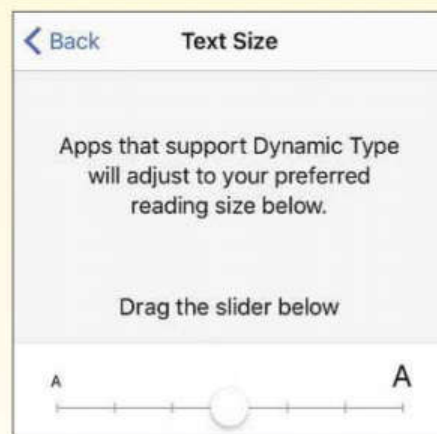


In Android, you can find a similar feature by going to Settings, Accessibility and activating 'Magnification gestures'. This lets you zoom in and out by triple-tapping your screen, and move the page around using two fingers.

Increase the size of onscreen text

Both iOS and Android have built-in options for increasing the size of the displayed fonts. You can choose to increase them fractionally or 'super-size' them to make them massive. It's very easy to set the size you want but, unfortunately, your preference won't always make a difference if the website or app isn't mobile-friendly. However, it's still worth a try.

In iOS, tap Settings, Display & Brightness, Text Size and drag the slider to the right until you get to the size you want. If that's still not big enough, go to Settings, General, Accessibility and tap Larger Text. Turn Larger Accessibility Sizes to On, then drag the slider to the right.



In Android, tap Settings, Display, Font Size, and choose either Small, Normal, Large or – for optimum effect – Huge!

Make text bold so it's easier to see

As well as letting you adjust the size of the typefaces used on your phone, iOS



lets you make text bold, so it appears thicker and darker. If you've already resized the font using the advice in the previous tip, making it bold can make it even easier to read. Just go to Settings, Display & Brightness and flick the Bold Text switch to On. You will then be prompted to restart your phone to apply the change.

Unfortunately, Android doesn't include a built-in Bold option, but there is a new feature in Lollipop called 'high contrast' that adds an outline to some onscreen text. To activate it, go to Settings, Accessibility and select 'High contrast text'. You can see the effect the feature has in the screen grabs above.

Invert the colours on your phone

Some people find it easier to read white text on a black background than dark text on white. To see if this works better for you, try inverting the colours on your mobile device. In iOS, go to Settings, General, Accessibility and turn

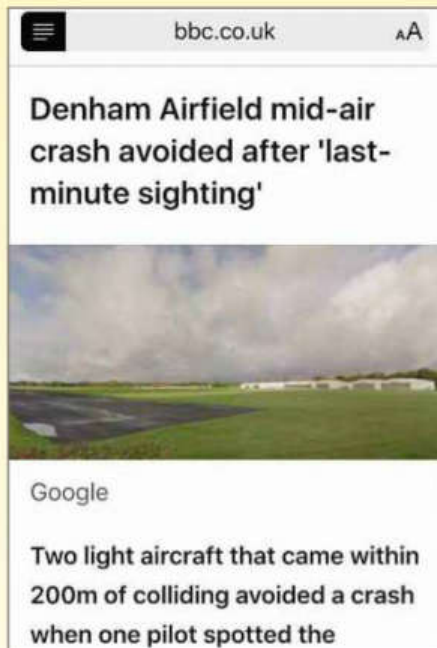
on Invert Colours.

Android offers the same feature, but only on devices running Lollipop or later. Go to Settings, Accessibility and flick the switch next to Colour Inversion. In future, you can toggle this on or off via the Quick Settings panel.

Bear in mind that it's not only the colour of text that will be inverted but also everything else, including icons, images and apps.

Use Safari's Reader Mode

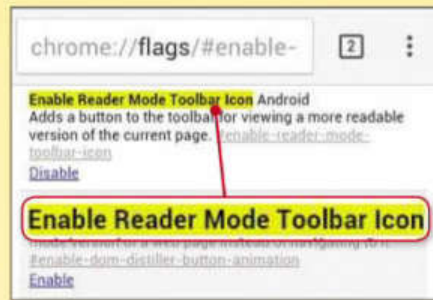
Apple's iOS browser has a useful Reader Mode that removes all the junk on a web page and presents you with a plain, highly readable page of black text on a white background. Just browse to the site you want to view and, hopefully, you should see 'Reader Mode Available' pop up in the address bar. Tap the four lines to the left of the URL to activate this mode. Tapping again will switch back to the standard view.



Use Chrome's Reader Mode

Safari isn't the only mobile browser to offer a special reading mode; Chrome also offers the feature on Android devices. This isn't enabled by default, but it's easy enough to turn on. Type `chrome://flags` into the browser's address bar and hit Enter. Scroll down to the entry 'Enable Reader Mode Toolbar Icon', then tap the Enable option and tap Relaunch Now. When you're browsing the web, tap the Reader icon when it appears (it's an underlined 'A' with three lines next to it) and the page will be instantly redesigned to make it easier to read on your mobile device.

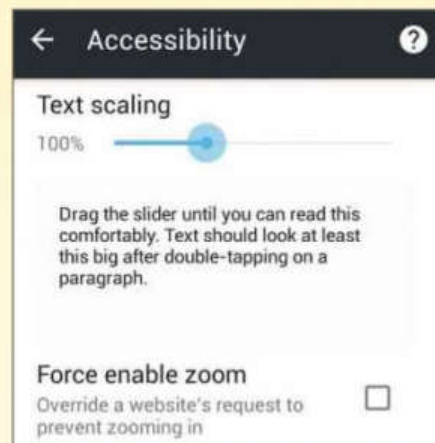
If you're not seeing the button, go back into `chrome://flags` and set when it



should appear. Find the Reader Mode Triggering entry and tap it to change the settings. You can have it appear on all web pages if you want

Use Accessibility settings in Chrome

Another way to make web pages easier to read when you're using Chrome on Android is to change the browser's zoom settings. Open the main menu, tap Settings and select Accessibility. From here, you can adjust the text scaling to make it more readable – just drag the slider to the right until the text reaches your desired size. You can also 'force enable' zoom to override websites that prevent you from zooming in.



Clean up mobile web pages using Readability

Readability (www.readability.com) makes web pages easier to read by cleaning up the text and removing extraneous content. It's available for Android (www.readability.com/android) and iOS (bit.ly/readability381), as well as on desktop PCs. Readability works like a normal browser, but at the bottom of the page you'll see two buttons. Read Now switches to the streamlined reading view, and Read Later adds the current story to a reading list so you can come back to it, and other queued-up stories, another time.

Change the way you read using BeeLine Reader

BeeLine Reader (www.beeline reader.com) makes reading text faster and

BUY AN EASY-TO-READ PHONE

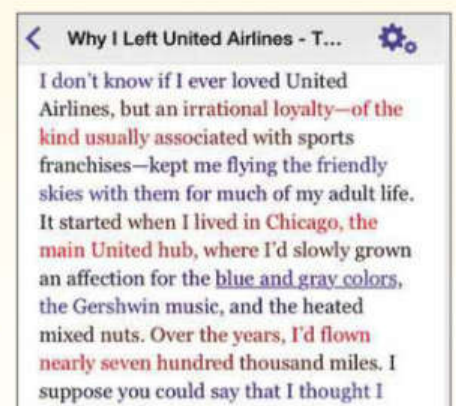
If you're struggling with your current smartphone, you might consider swapping it for one that's easier to use and designed specifically for older users or people with failing eyesight. Doro (www.doro.co.uk) produces a range of such devices, in various attractive but simple designs. Its website lets you filter the selection on offer by the functions that are important to you, such as backlit keypad, hearing-aid compatible and an Assistance button that gives you instant access to pre-defined Help numbers.



Doro phones all offer large, clear icons and text for easy navigation. You can compare the different phone choices on the company's website, and buy them from various retailers including Tesco, John Lewis and Boots. Prices start from around £100.

more comfortable by using a coloured gradient to guide your eyes. This prevents you from accidentally skipping lines and is particularly useful for people with poor vision, dyslexia or ADD. The website includes a reading challenge that tests whether you'll benefit from BeeLine Reader.

There's a free mobile app for iOS (bit.ly/beelineios381) and the tool can also be used in Safari and other apps. You can set it up how you want by choosing the colour of the guidelines, font type, font size, and spacing. ■



Dual-boot anything with anything



It's easy to run different combinations of operating system on the same PC, if you know how. **Wayne Williams** explains how to dual-boot five pairs of unlikely bedfellows

WINDOWS 7 & WINDOWS 10



Setting up different versions of Windows to dual boot on your PC is surprisingly straightforward, but the golden rule is that you must start with the oldest operating system first. This is because earlier versions of Windows won't recognise the start-up files used in the later versions, so they will probably overwrite them, which will prevent the newer OS from booting.

To dual-boot Windows 7 and 10, you'll first need to create a new partition for the second (newer) version of Windows (10) in Windows 7. You can use a dedicated program such as the free EaseUS Partition Master (www.partition-tool.com) or the built-in Windows partitioning tool. For the latter, go to Start, Control Panel, 'System and Security', Administrative



It's easy to run two versions of Windows alongside each other

Tools. Double-click Computer Management and select the Disk Management option on the left. Right-click the drive you want to partition and select 'Shrink Volume' to make some space for the new OS.

Once this is done, create a Windows 10 setup disc or USB flash drive using

the free tool from bit.ly/win10install381 and boot from this. Choose to install the OS into the new partition that you created. You will need a valid licence to use Windows 10 properly (although you can install the OS without one), which you can either buy from Microsoft (expensive), or 'authorise' your PC by upgrading your existing OS (Windows 7 or 8.1) to Windows 10 before you do anything else.

Once you've downloaded the upgrade, install Windows 10 to the new partition, boot into the original installation and roll back the upgrade in Settings, Update & Security, Windows Update. This method is time consuming, but it works and it's free, and it will provide you with the best of both Windows worlds.

WINDOWS & UBUNTU



The best way to dual-boot Windows and Ubuntu Linux is to first install Windows, then create a partition for Ubuntu. Boot from your live Ubuntu disc or flash drive and select the install option. The 'Installation type' screen should show you an option to 'Install Ubuntu alongside Windows'. If it doesn't, select 'Something else' instead and click Continue. Select the empty partition you created earlier (it will be called 'free space'), click the '+' button and devote 10 per cent of the

available space for use as a swap file (virtual memory). Change 'Use as' to 'Swap area' and click OK. Select the remaining free space, and click the '+' sign. Set the partition type as Primary and select slash (/) as the Mount Point (this means the root directory). Ubuntu will copy the required system files to your hard drive and install the OS.

When this is finished, you'll be able to boot from either Ubuntu or Windows. Ubuntu will be set as the



Choose whether you want to boot into Windows or Ubuntu

default option but you'll soon get used to selecting the OS you want at boot.

MAC OS X YOSEMITE & WINDOWS 10



You can run Windows 10 on a Mac using a built-in feature called Boot Camp. Different Mac models work with different versions of Windows, and you can check whether your computer is compatible at bit.ly/bootcamp381. If you already have Windows 7 or 8+ on your Mac, you can upgrade to Windows 10 for free; if you don't, you will need a Windows 10 licence. To install Windows, go to the Utilities folder and open Boot Camp Assistant, which will walk you through the stages of partitioning the drive, downloading the required drivers and setting up everything. You'll find some additional instructions at bit.ly/dualbootmac381.

Installing Mac OS X alongside Windows on a PC is much more



Bootcamp lets you run Windows on a Mac by creating a partition

complicated and you will need the correct hardware (Windows systems that are able to run OS X are, amusingly, referred to as 'Hackintoshes'). Provided your motherboard was designed for Intel processors, and it was made in the last five years or so, it should work, but



Hackintosh.com explains how to run Mac OS X on your PC

you'll also need a compatible graphics card. If you do manage to get things up and running, there's a good chance your Wi-Fi won't work in Mac OS X, and you'll probably encounter other problems, too. Hackintosh.com (www.hackintosh.com) is a good place to find out more before you try.

ANDROID & WINDOWS



You can set Android to dual-boot alongside Windows on any PC. Android is based on Linux so, if you've installed Ubuntu (or similar) as a dual boot before, you'll find the process familiar. Download the Android OS from www.android-x86.org, then write it to a disc or a USB flash drive and boot from it. Follow the instructions to install it in a new partition. Make sure you allow the installation of the GRUB bootloader (you won't be able to dual boot without it). There's a more detailed guide at bit.ly/dualbootandroid381.

Alternatively, you can run Android apps on your PC using the BlueStacks



Android can be dual-booted alongside Windows just like Linux

emulator (www.bluestacks.com). This free program lets you search Google Play for apps and games to download, then opens them on your Desktop.

TOO MANY OPERATING SYSTEMS?

Most people choose to have no more than two operating systems installed on a single device, but it's possible to have more. However, before you draw up grand plans for a quadruple-boot – or even sextuple-boot – system, you need to be aware that things can get seriously complicated once you start adding more operating systems to the mix. While the process of creating a multi-boot system is essentially the same as creating a dual-boot one, you'll need a lot of space for each individual partition, and you will need to install all the operating systems in the correct order for the arrangement to work. Unless you relish the idea of tinkering with bootloaders in the quest to get things up and running, you'll need to work out the order of everything before you start, and ideally begin with a freshly formatted hard drive. The more operating systems you add, the more complicated things will get.

LINUX & CHROME OS



Google has two operating systems: Android and Chrome OS. The latter is only available on Chromebooks, but you can install Chromium OS alongside Linux (or Windows for that matter) on a PC.







Chromium OS is a version of Chrome you can run alongside Linux

Just as Chromium is the open-source browser that Google's Chrome is based on, so Chromium OS is the open-source project that Chrome OS is built around. It isn't quite the same, and it lacks the polish provided by Google, but it's close enough for most people's needs. The process of setting up a dual boot is slightly tricky – you need to install Chromium OS first, resize the boot partition and then install Linux – but there are detailed instructions at bit.ly/dualbootchromium381. The Chromium OS that you need can be downloaded for free from bit.ly/chromiumos381.



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Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 22 September 2015.

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Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your browser by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you unravel our web-themed word search and guess our film-title emoji?

WEB USER WORD SEARCH

Can you find the following websites in the grid on the right? Words may appear vertically, horizontally or diagonally, and forwards or backwards

BUZZFEED
EXPEDIA
FLICKR
GROUPON
HOTUKDEALS
LINKEDIN
PINTEREST
REDDIT
RIGHTMOVE
YOUTUBE

Y	G	A	E	W	Q	F	X	N	A	H	D
O	B	R	Z	V	L	K	I	J	O	U	E
U	Q	C	O	I	O	D	K	T	M	L	E
T	M	H	C	U	E	M	U	Y	Y	O	F
U	N	K	B	K	P	K	T	Q	S	O	Z
B	R	O	N	F	D	O	Q	H	Y	J	Z
E	G	I	P	E	I	T	N	U	G	A	U
Z	L	D	A	T	I	D	D	E	R	I	B
S	F	L	E	X	P	E	D	I	A	P	R
X	S	X	K	B	P	U	Z	U	H	I	Z
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T	S	E	R	E	T	N	I	P	Q	T	X

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE FILM TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?

1



2



3



4

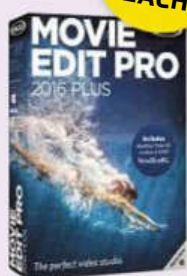


Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz381

COMPETITIONS

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Use the new tools in iOS 9

www.apple.com/uk/ios

Apple's mobile operating system has been updated and the new version introduces loads of new tools, including multitasking on the iPad. Here's what you need to know

Apple has released a new version of its mobile operating system. iOS 9 boosts system performance, battery life, and security, and comes with some new and improved apps and a smarter, more useful Siri. There's a better keyboard, a redesigned app switcher, iCloud Drive improvements and more. If

you own an iPad, iOS 9 also brings new multitasking capabilities to the tablet for the first time.

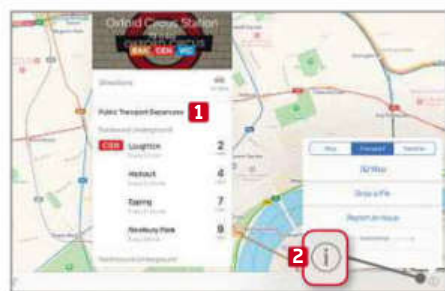
The new OS works on the iPhone 4S and above, iPad 2 and above, iPod Touch 5th generation and above, and all versions of the iPad mini. However, not all features are available on all devices.



1 iOS 9 has a redesigned app switcher. Double-tap the Home button to see a selection of overlapping app cards **1** you can flick through, with recently used apps on the right, and older ones on the left. If you're working in an app on another Apple device, you'll be able to switch to it via the Handoff indicator. **2**



2 To access Spotlight search, you used to swipe up from the centre of the screen; now, you swipe in from the left. In iOS 9, Siri displays proactive suggestions – contacts and apps you might want, **1** along with top news stories. **2** You can ask Siri much more now, either by speaking a question or typing it. **3**



3 Apple Maps has been improved and shows transit and public transport info for selected cities. Only London is included for the UK, but more cities will be added. Roadworks and road closures are displayed, and tapping a railway station shows public transport departures. **1** Tap the 'i' **2** to switch views.



4 Multitasking on iPad is a welcome addition that introduces three new features. The first is Slide Over, which lets you quickly dip into another app without leaving the one you're currently in. Swipe in from the right to bring up a side window, **1** then tap the handle at the top **2** to select the app you want.

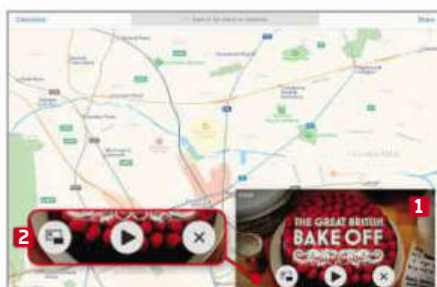


5 Slide Over doesn't let you access the app full screen while the sidebar is open. For that, you need to switch to Split View. Open Slide Over, switch to the app you want, then drag the handle on the left **1** to resize as required. You can now work in both apps at the same time. This only works on iPad Air 2 and iPad mini 4.

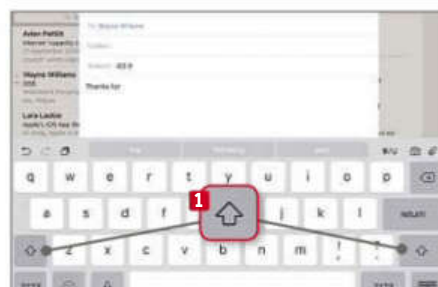
PHOTOS

The Photos app has new albums for Screenshots and Selfies. The latter contains photos taken using the front-facing camera

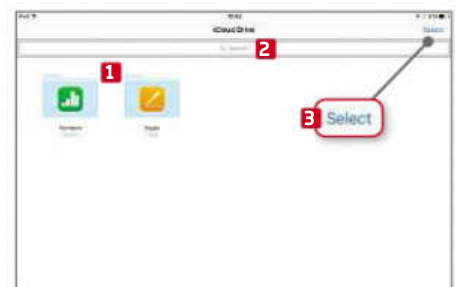




6 The third multitasking tool is Picture in Picture, which lets you watch a video or use FaceTime while doing other things. Tap the Home button to shrink the playing video to a corner of your screen. **1** You can move it around and resize it, and tap it to get the controls. **2** You can then launch another app.



7 The keyboard has some new tricks: tapping the shift key **1** now changes the case on all the keys, so you're less likely to accidentally write everything in capitals; and holding down two fingers on the iPad keyboard turns it into a trackpad, making it easier to select text and move it around. This also works on the iPhone 6s.



8 There's now an iCloud Drive app that you can toggle on or off in Settings. This lets you see your stored images and documents. **1** You can browse folders, open files, move them to a different location, and share or delete them. Search for an item **2** and use Select **3** to move and manage content.



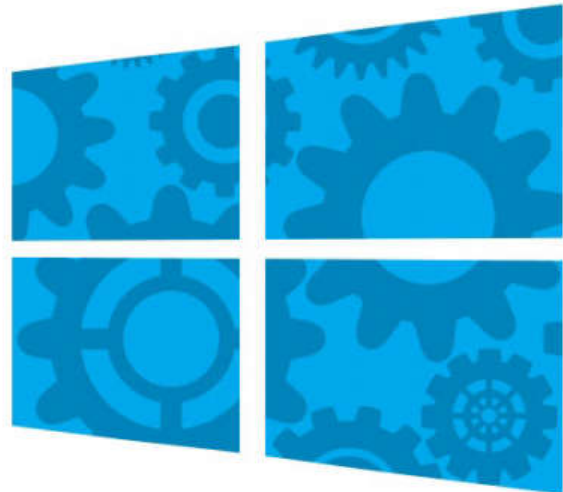
Access all Windows 10 settings in one place

Ultimate Windows Tweaker 4: bit.ly/tweaker381 | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ Windows 10

It's easy to get lost in Windows 10, particularly when you're trying to configure your PC's settings for optimum performance. With tools split across the Settings window and the Control Panel, it's tricky enough to even know where to look. And the more complex settings sometimes need Registry access to work properly.

Ultimate Windows Tweaker 4 (UWT) solves this problem by bringing over 200 tweaks into one handy interface. It's portable, so you don't have to install it, and it takes up just 495KB of hard drive space. After you've downloaded it, simply open the Zip file and copy the enclosed folder to a safe place, such as the Program Files folder. You can then either create a shortcut on the Desktop or pin it to your Start menu.

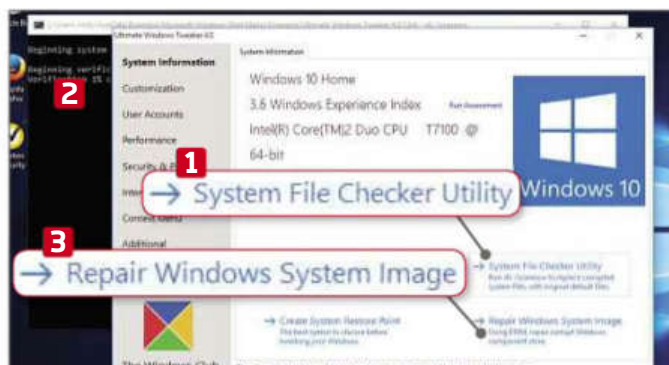
The program needs to run in administrator mode (which it will do automatically, so it may ask for an admin password if you're using a standard user account) and it will create a restore point for you before you start.



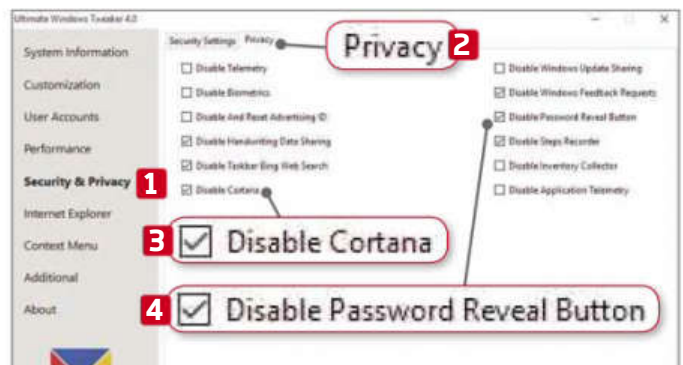
1 The main System Information screen displays information about your PC, including the version of Windows you're running **1** and the amount of installed memory. **2** You can test your PC using the Windows Experience Index (this isn't in Windows 10). Click Run Assessment **3** to find your score.



2 UWT creates a System Restore point the first time it runs but this is worth doing every time you launch the software. You can do it from the System Information page by clicking Create System Restore Point **1** or get more control by using the Advanced Recovery Options. **2**



3 You can also run the System File Checker Utility **1** from here – normally you'd have to use the command prompt, which the software opens for you. **2** If it doesn't work, an extra tool can help fix problems with your Windows files, which you can run by clicking Repair Windows System Image. **3**



4 Click Security & Privacy, **1** then select the Privacy tab. **2** This has new settings for Windows 10. If you want to shut down Windows' communication with Microsoft, tick all the boxes. Otherwise, tick the ones that bother you or that you don't use, such as Cortana **3** or the Password Reveal Button. **4**



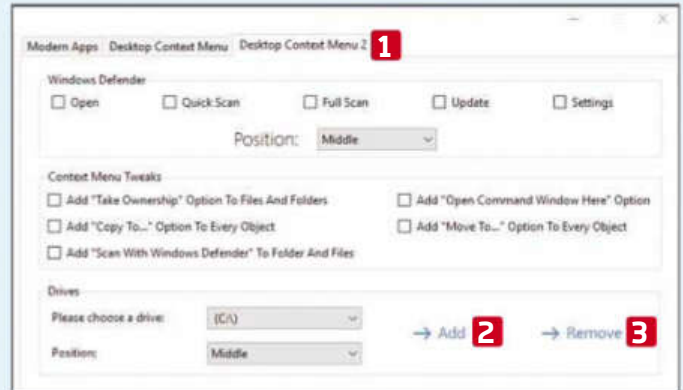
EXPERT TIP

ANDY SHAW says

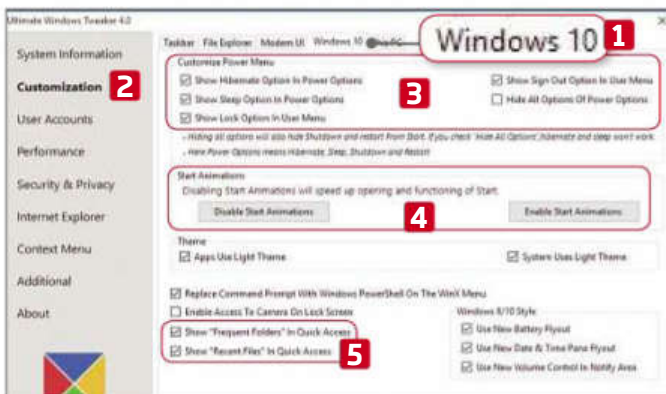
If you're not sure what a tweak does, hover your mouse over it. The section at the bottom, which usually says 'There's nothing to show right now' should change into a tool tip explaining what the tweak will do, although it isn't available for all the tips. If something goes wrong, use your restore point to go back or click the Restore Defaults button, then click Apply.



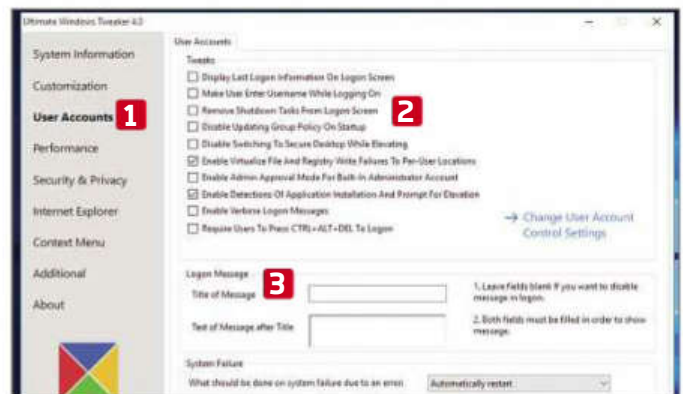
5 You can add some of Windows 10's new apps directly to the right-click context menu, so that they can be quickly launched from the Desktop. Select Context Menu, **1** then go to the Modern Apps tab. **2** Tick any apps you want to access and click the Apply button. **3**



6 Select the Desktop Context Menu 2 tab. **1** A new Drives section lets you add shortcuts to individual drives to your right-click menu. Choose the drive and its position on the menu, then click Add. **2** Click Apply at the bottom of the page. To remove a drive, select it again and click Remove. **3**



7 There's a new Windows 10 tab **1** in the Customization section. **2** You can make changes to the Power Menu, **3** remove animations from the Start menu **4** (to speed it up), and tweak the items that appear in the Quick Access section of Explorer. **5**



8 The User Accounts section **1** contains tools you can use to change the Logon screen, where you select which user account to load. The list of Tweaks **2** lets you set options, such as forcing users to type in their names for added security, and you can add a message to the logon screen. **3**



9 The Additional section **1** is worth taking a look at. You can change how the icons display in the Notification Area, **2** adjust the width of scroll bars, **3** and make changes to hide your PC and its files from your local network. **4**



10 If you like to regularly tweak your settings, look under the Ultimate Windows Tweaker Options and tick Automatically Start When Windows Starts. **1** Alternatively, add it to your right-click menu **2** to launch it from there. We've got more right-click tricks on page 64.



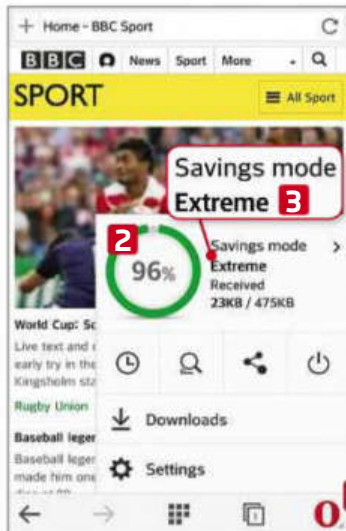
Reduce your mobile data usage

Opera Mini for Android compresses web pages so they load faster and you use less mobile data. The app has recently been updated to introduce a new mode that offers effective compression without compromising the way

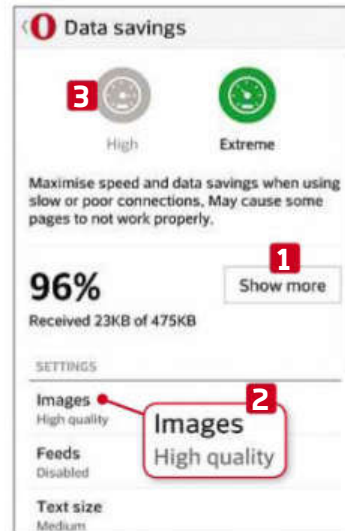
pages appear in the browser. In this Workshop, we show you how to apply different levels of compression and track your data savings, and introduce you to the browser's other useful features.



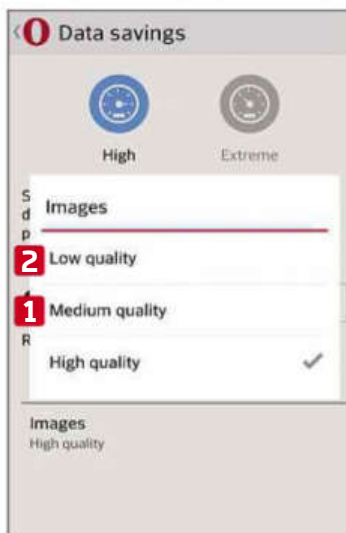
Opera Mini: bit.ly/operamini381 | **5 mins** | **Android (varies with device)**



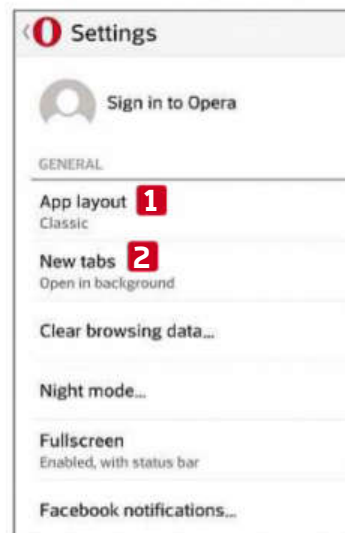
1 Download and run Opera Mini. Load a website, then tap the Opera icon. **1** It shows the percentage of data usage you've saved **2** compared to what you would have used on another browser. The app uses Extreme mode **3** by default, which offers the best savings, although it can also cause pages to load incorrectly.



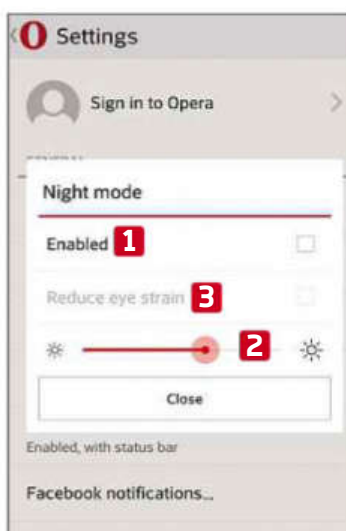
2 Tap 'Savings mode' and 'Show more' **1** to see a chart of your usage in Extreme mode over the last five days, or to reset the browser's counter. In Settings, you can change the level of image compression. **2** To ensure that all pages load properly, while still taking advantage of Opera's data-saving capabilities, choose High mode. **3**



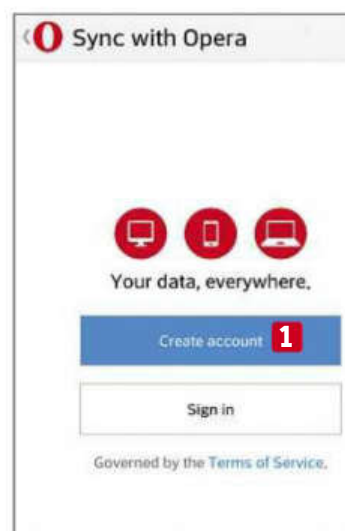
3 By default, the image compression in High mode is set to 'High quality', but you can improve your data savings further by choosing 'Medium quality' **1** or 'Low quality'. **2** The app keeps a record of data savings made in High mode in addition to the log for Extreme mode.



4 Opera Mini offers three different interfaces, so you can choose the one that best suits your device. Tap the Opera icon, select Settings, then 'App layout' **1** to pick from the Phone, Classic or Tablet layouts. The browser opens new tabs in the background by default. To change this, tap 'New tabs' **2** in Settings and choose 'Open in foreground'.



5 To make reading in the dark easier, choose 'Night mode' from the Settings menu and tap Enabled **1** to dim your screen. You can fine tune the brightness using the onscreen slider, **2** and there's also a second option to 'Reduce eye strain', **3** which changes the colour of the light emitted by your screen.



6 Like Chrome and Firefox, Opera Mini lets you sync your bookmarks and open tabs between devices. To take advantage of this tool, select 'Sign in to Opera' from the top of the Settings screen and tap 'Create account'. **1**



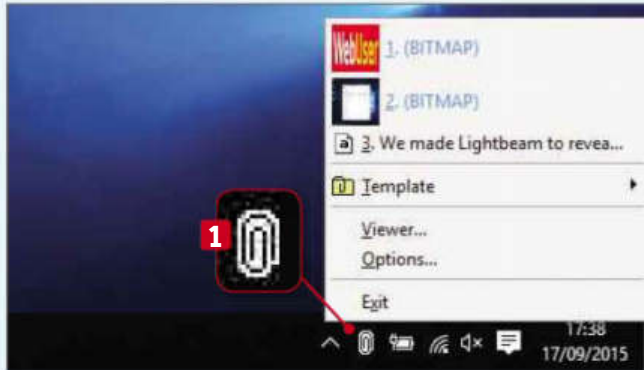
Store unlimited items on your clipboard

Copying something to the Windows clipboard is simplicity itself – you just highlight an item and press Ctrl+C. The drawback is that you can only store one item at a time, so anything you save replaces and erases your

previously copied items. The handy free tool CLCL solves this by keeping a history of everything you've copied, so you can paste them again and again if you want.



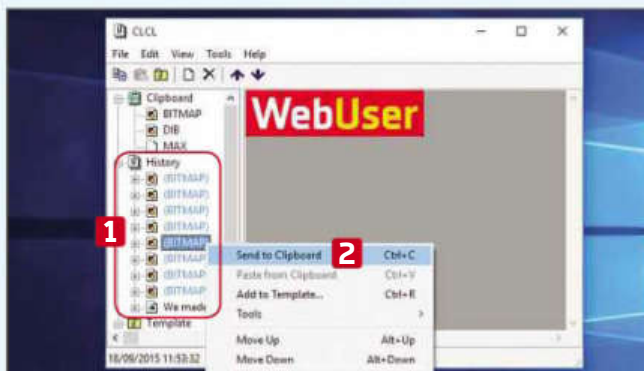
CLCL: bit.ly/clcl381 | 10 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10



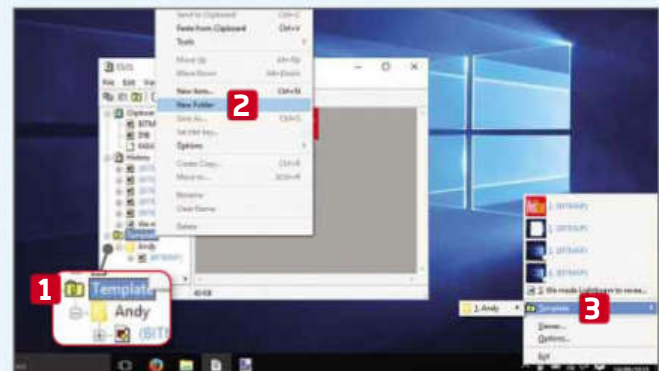
1 Add items to the clipboard by selecting and copying them as normal. You don't have to paste before copying the next item, just keep copying as many things as you like. Left-click the paperclip in the Notification Area to see what's currently stored. **1**



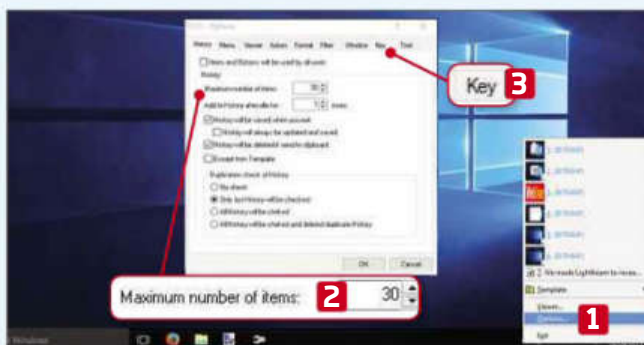
2 Pressing Ctrl+V will, as normal, paste whatever was last copied to the clipboard. You can also select a previously copied item in the notification area menu **1** to place that in the clipboard instead. If you're in the correct type of program, the chosen item will also paste automatically. **2**



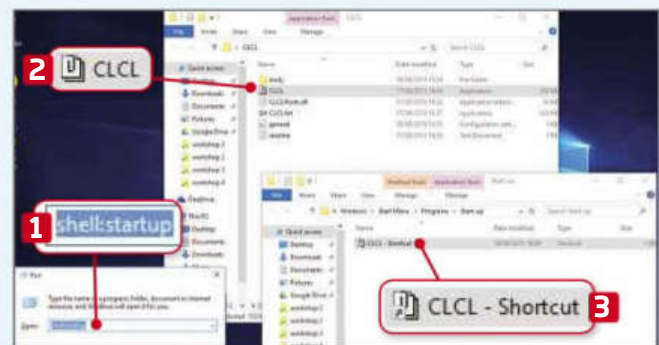
3 Right-click the CLCL icon to open the Viewer. The tree on the left shows your Clipboard history, displaying all the items you've previously copied. **1** Right-click one and select 'Send to Clipboard' **2** to make it the current Clipboard item, so you can easily paste it elsewhere.



4 If you want a clipboard item you use a lot, such as an email signature or logo, to be easily accessible, right-click Template **1** and select New Folder. **2** Right-click the item to save it, click 'Add to Template' and select the new folder. It'll now be available from the notification-area menu. **3**



5 Left-click the icon in the notification area and select Options **1** to open the settings. The configuration tools cover everything from the maximum number of items available at a time **2** to the shortcut keys used for copying and pasting (which you'll find in the Key tab). **3**



6 We think this tool is so useful that you'll want it to start with Windows. To set this up in Windows 10, press Windows+R and, in the Run box, type shell:Startup. **1** Press Enter, then drag the CLCL.exe program **2** into the Startup folder **3** while holding down Alt to create a shortcut.

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance



How to...

Make your own weather station

Wayne Williams shows you how to create your own weather station, to share your local weather conditions with the rest of the world



There are lots of ways to find out what the weather is going to be like, such as watching a TV forecast, checking on the web or using an app. Mobile apps are great because they can tell you the weather based on your location, but they aren't always as accurate as you might expect or hope. Current conditions and forecasts often come from a regional weather station that might not be all that close to your actual location. For more accurate, real-time analysis, the best option is to create your very own weather station. This Weekend Project explains how to get started.

What you'll need

There are numerous ready-made personal weather stations (PWSs) that you can set up outside your home, which will measure data such as temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, wind, rainfall, dew point, wind chill, UV index and light. You can pick up a simple digital forecaster for around £30 or an advanced weather station for between £100 and £300. The latter will provide

much more detailed information, and give you the option to save the recorded data to a PC for further analysis or for sharing on the web.

Greenfrog Scientific (www.greenfrogscientific.co.uk) is the UK retailer of Aercus Instruments weather stations, and has some excellent products to choose from. The WS3083 Pro Wireless Weather Station costs £119 and has a backlit console that displays a

range of weather variables, including UV and light measurements. The unit stores up to three months' worth of data that you can download to your PC via USB.

For another £20, you could pick up the WeatherSleuth instead. Its receiver plugs directly into your router, so you can access real-time weather monitoring over the internet. If you want something really advanced, there's the excellent WeatherRanger Professional Weather



Greenfrog Scientific sells a good range of AerCus weather stations

Station. This costs £229 and offers a full-colour console, encrypted Wi-Fi (with a real-world range of 20-40m) and real-time internet publishing. We show you how to set up a WeatherRanger in our Mini Workshop below.

Weather Weather Weather (www.weather-station-products.co.uk) has a large selection of digital weather stations and forecasters, with prices starting from £30 and rising to £1,000. The LaCrosse Professional Wireless Weather Station costs £250 and records all the information you're likely to be interested in. It comes with a USB dongle to make it



Weather Weather Weather offers a range of devices from different manufacturers

easy to copy the data to your PC.

If you want a more affordable option, Maplin sells a USB Wireless Touchscreen Weather Centre for £70 (bit.ly/maplin381). This measures details such as temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity, rainfall and barometric pressure.

To ensure accurate readings, weather stations need to be positioned at least 5ft above the ground or rooftop (to avoid radiant heat transfer), out of direct sunlight, and horizontally level. You can try your weather station in a location temporarily to test whether it's suitable.



Maplin's Weather Centre is affordable and easily mounted on an outbuilding or shed

data from over 100,000 personal weather stations and, although a lot of these are based in the US, there should be plenty nearby for you to link to. You can analyse, share and compare information from weather stations and customise how you view data. There's also the option to receive RapidFire Updates. By default WunderStation refreshes the onscreen information every five minutes or so. With RapidFire enabled, updates occur roughly every five seconds, providing near real-time information.

If you have your own weather station, you can connect it to Weather Underground and use the app to update



The WeatherRanger comes with an indoor sensor and colour screen

Turn an iPad into a weather monitor

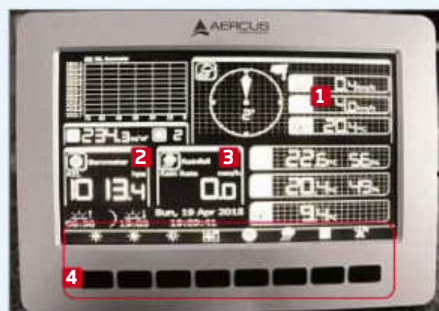
There's a good chance that someone living near you will already have set up their own personal weather station. Weather Underground (www.wunderground.com) provides a central location for people to share weather data, which you can view using an iPad and the free WunderStation app (bit.ly/wunder381). This app gives you access to



MINI WORKSHOP | Set up and use the WeatherRanger Professional Weather Station



1 The supplied manual guides you through the process of setting up the WeatherRanger. You need to install the wind vane, **1** mounting pole **2** and batteries, **3** then erect the weather station. The kit comes with a Thermo-Hygrometer-Barometer Transmitter for indoor use to measure inside temperature, humidity and pressure.



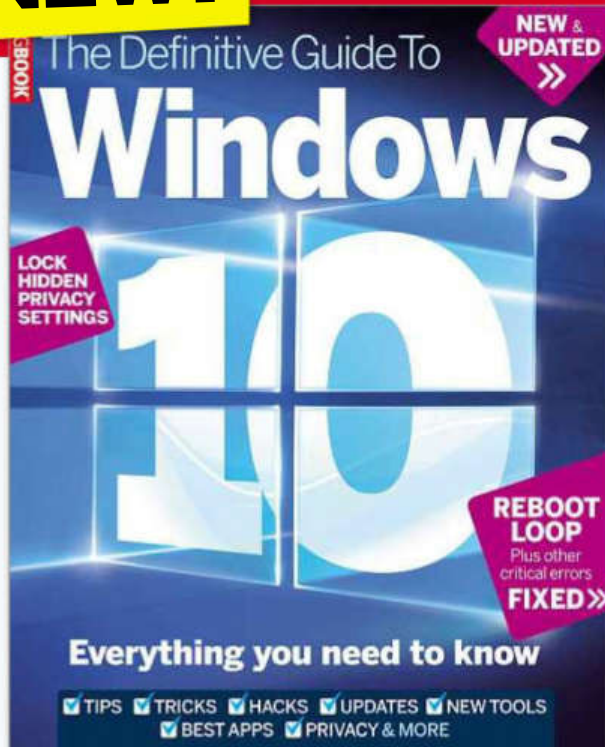
2 Once everything is in place, connect the display console to the mains and wait for it to synchronise with the indoor and outdoor transmitters. The screen shows weather information including wind speed, **1** pressure **2** and rainfall. **3** Use the buttons underneath **4** to change the settings.



3 The console is configured to automatically send real-time data to Weather Underground. Sign up to the website to get a password and station ID, then click the Setup button on the console. Use the buttons to select Weather Server and go into Setup. Enter your Station ID **1** and Password. **2**

WebUser Bookstore

NEW!



THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10

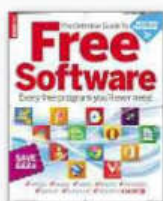
This 148-page book is the only guide you need to use Microsoft's new operating system. You'll learn how to master all the new tools, lock Microsoft's weak privacy settings and stop future updates wrecking your PC. It includes fixes for all the problems and bugs that have appeared in Windows 10 since it launched. Plus, you'll discover how to make Cortana understand you, remove the apps you hate, fix the dreaded Reboot Loop problem, master the new Edge browser, and stop Microsoft sharing your personal info. Don't use Windows 10 without this book by your side!

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FREE SOFTWARE

Free software can be a worry. Is it as good as a paid-for package? Will it sneak junk on to your PC? Does it nag you to update to a premium version? In our new 148-page book *The Definitive Guide to Free Software*, we recommend only the best free programs that deliver high-quality features and no nasty surprises.

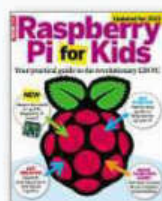


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RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS

The Raspberry Pi is the incredible £20 British computer that's taking the world by storm. It's ideal for children of all ages to experiment, play games and learn valuable skills. We've updated this 148-page book for 2015 to include instructions on mastering the new Pi models (A+ and B+).

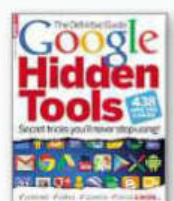


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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GOOGLE HIDDEN TOOLS

In the 164-page *The Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools*, we lift the lid on Google's most popular tools with more than 430 ways to make them more efficient, useful and tailored to your needs. These include clever add-ons for Chrome, amazing free apps for Android and stunning sights in Google Maps.



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The WunderStation app is a great way to gather and view your station's readings



The Met Office has its own site to gather information from personal weather stations



The web has lots of info on connecting your weather station to your Raspberry Pi

your station's status. We show you how to register your weather station with Weather Underground in our Mini Workshop below.

Other weather sharing sites

While Weather Underground is arguably the best place to share and view data from personal weather stations, it's not the only site of this kind. PWS Weather (www.pwsweather.com) brings together data from local weather stations. There's a decent selection listed in the UK and you can easily add your own. The Met Office also has a site that shows data from connected weather stations. WOW (Weather Observations Website) at www.metoffice.gov.uk colour codes all the stations, so you can see the temperature around the UK at a glance. You can also switch layers to get a picture of other weather conditions, such as rainfall, wind speed and direction, humidity, snowfall and weather impacts.

You can enter manual observations on the site without logging in, but you'll need to create a free account to connect your own weather-monitoring hardware and have updates submitted automatically.

If you want to share weather data on the web, you'll need to make sure your PWS has software that is compatible with the site you're planning to connect to. The Aeracus Instruments products mentioned previously, for example, use WeatherSnoop (www.weathersnoop.com), which works with all the major sites including Weather Underground, PWS Weather and WOW.

Use a Raspberry Pi to manage and share weather data

While you can use a desktop or laptop PC to gather and manage data from a personal weather station, if you have a Raspberry Pi that's currently just gathering dust, you might want to

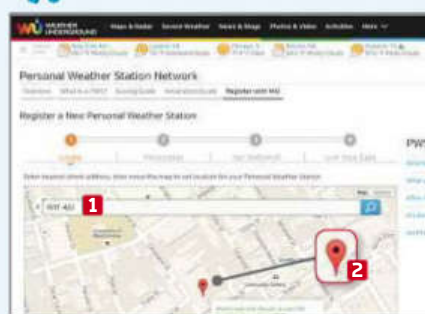
consider using that instead. The process of setting it all up isn't particularly difficult – although it might take a little time – and, once configured, the Pi can automatically upload the raw data to Weather Underground and any other sites you like.

All you need is a Raspberry Pi (any model should work) and a weather station with a USB connection, such as Maplin's USB Wireless Touchscreen Weather Centre. There's a full set of detailed instructions on how to get everything up and running at bit.ly/weapi381. However, you might want to consider using the WeeWX software (www.weewx.com) on your Pi instead, because this is generally viewed as more stable and reliable.

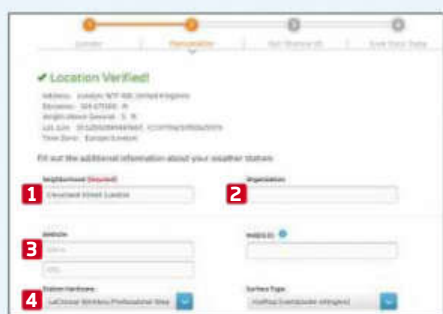
As well as running on the Raspberry Pi, you can use WeeWX with other versions of Linux and Mac OS X. There's a full list of weather stations that will work with it at bit.ly/wee381.



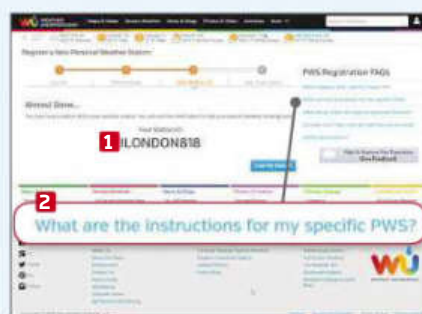
MINI WORKSHOP | Register your Personal Weather Station on Weather Underground



1 Before you begin, you will need to create an account. A basic, free one is fine. Once you've done that, go to bit.ly/sign381. Enter your location details in the search box (a postcode works well). **1** Move the pin **2** to the exact location of your weather station.



2 The Elevation will be entered automatically and change as you move the pin on the map. Add the height above ground of your weather station. Click Verify Location and fill in additional info, such as your neighbourhood, **1** organisation, **2** website **3** and station hardware. **4** If your device isn't listed, you can select 'Other'.



3 You'll now be given a station ID **1** that you will need to enter, along with your password, into your weather station's software. On the right, click 'What are the instructions for my specific PWS?' **2** if you're not sure what to do. Once it's set up, it will take around a day or so before your personal forecast shows up on the site.

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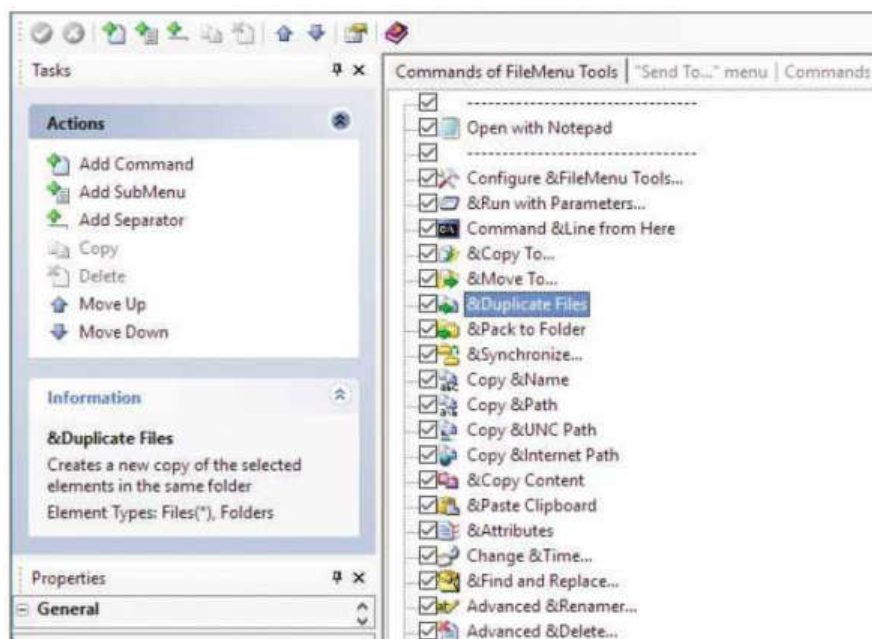
Our experts show you some new tricks for customising your Windows right-click 'context' menu

TOP TIPS FOR THE WINDOWS RIGHT-CLICK MENU

Turbo-charge your right-click menu

When you right-click a file or folder, a menu of useful options pops up. FileMenu Tools (bit.ly/file381) gives this 'context' menu a massive power boost, adding over 30 useful commands such as Run With Parameters, Copy To, Move To, Copy Name, Copy Path, Attributes, Delete Locked File, Copy Content and many more. They all appear on the FileMenu Tools sub-menu.

Download the portable version of FileMenu Tools to avoid adware, run it and save it to the Downloads folder. Open the folder and double-click Register FileMenu Tools. Right-click any file and explore the new menu. Run the FileMenu Tools program to view the commands, modify them or add your own, though you should only try the latter option if you're an expert. The Help menu provides individual descriptions of all the commands.



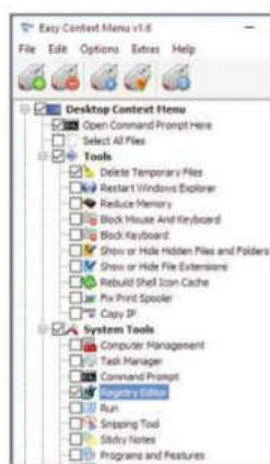
FileMenu Tools lets you add a library of useful commands to the right-click menu

Add, remove and clean up right-click options

Easy Context Menu (bit.ly/easy381) is one of the best editors and clean-up tools for the right-click menu that we've found. It's a brilliant free tool that adds many useful commands to the right-click menu on the Desktop and in Explorer windows. It offers different sets of commands that depend on the object that is right-clicked, including the Desktop, computer, drives, folders, files and executable files.

Unzip the download and run EcMenu

(for 32-bit versions of Windows) or EcMenu_x64 (for 64-bit versions). It displays a long list of commands that are grouped together. Show or hide



Add lots of useful commands to the right-click menu with Easy Context Menu

commands by clicking the plus or minus boxes, and use the tick boxes to select the commands you want. Click the first icon in the toolbar to apply the changes.

Most of the commands are obvious, such as Delete Temporary

Files, Log Off, Defrag and Permanently Delete. If you want to put everything back as it was, click the second icon in the toolbar to uninstall everything.

There is an extra tool, called the ContextMenu Cleaner, that can be used to clean the right-click menu. Click the fourth toolbar button to see a simple list of right-click menu items, then use the tick boxes to make menu items active or inactive. Select one or more items and use the buttons on the left to enable, disable or delete them. Click 'Jump to registry key' to open the Registry Editor and show the item's key and values.

View shell extensions

When software is installed into Windows, it can add its own extra items to the right-click menu. For example, anti-virus software often adds a 'Scan this' option to the menu when you right-click a file. Many other

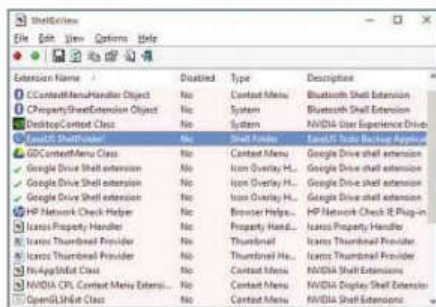
If you see words that look like they've been typed in a typewriter, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.



programs also add extra items, which can make the menu grow significantly and become unwieldy.

These extras are often called shell extensions and the free tool ShellExView (search for 'shellexview' at nirsoft.net) lets you view, enable or disable them. The program doesn't need installing, so just unzip it and double-click the program. After a few seconds, it displays a very long list of items. Go to the Options menu and select Hide All Microsoft Extensions. This hides the ones built into Windows, which will make the list shorter and more manageable.

Right-click an item to bring up a menu with options to enable or disable it. This can be used to remove troublesome items or to tidy up a long right-click menu. Select Properties to view useful information about the menu item, such as the developer, product name, filename, and so on.



Use ShellExView to enable or disable right-click items added by programs

Customise the 'Send to' menu

Right-click a file on the Desktop or in an Explorer window and you'll see a 'Send to' menu option. Hover your mouse over it and you'll see items including 'Compressed (zipped) folder', Desktop and Documents. Send To Toys (bit.ly/send381) lets you modify the 'Send to' menu and adds a number of useful extras.

Download and run the program. During installation, you can choose which items to add. All the options are ticked by default, and it's fine to leave it like this while you experiment with the tool. In the configuration window that appears, you'll be able to customise some of the commands. For example, in the Folder option, you can select the Folder tab and choose a destination for your files. The 'Clipboard (as content)' option copies the contents of a file, such as a document, to the clipboard, and the 'Clipboard (as name)' item copies the filename and path to the clipboard. Recycle Bin deletes a file; Folder copies or moves it to your last folder or whatever folder you specify; and Run adds it to the Run window.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Add any program to your right-click menu

Have you ever wished it was easier to launch your favourite programs on your PC? Instead of hunting around in the Start menu, you can put them on the right-click menu, where they can be accessed with two clicks. This is handy in Windows 7 and 10, but in Windows 8, with its awkward Start screen, it's essential. And it only takes a few Registry tweaks.

Press Windows+R to open the Run box and type regedit then Enter. The Registry Editor opens. In the left-hand pane, expand the keys and select:

HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\directory\background\shell

Right-click it and select New, Key. When asked to name it, give it the name of the program you want to add to the right-click menu. For example, name it WordPad.

Right-click the key you just made and select New, Key. Call this one command. Select it and, on the right, double-click '(Default)'. The full path to the program must be typed in quotes. There is an easy way to do this using Explorer. Find the program, such as Write.exe in the C:\Windows folder, hold down Shift and right-click it. Select 'Copy as path', switch back to the Registry Editor and press Ctrl+V to paste it into the (Default) value. Close the Registry Editor and right-click an empty part of the Desktop or an Explorer window to see the new menu item that you've added. Click it to run the program.

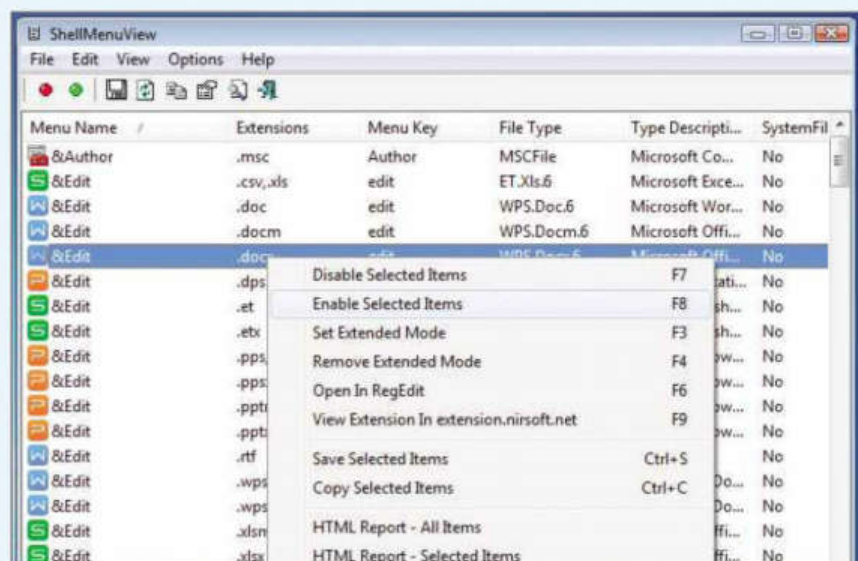
Manage shell menus

ShellMenuView (search for 'shellmenuview' at nirsoft.net) is a small tool that lets you view, enable or disable items on the right-click menu. It doesn't need installing – just unzip the file and double-click the program to run it. It produces a very long list of items that look confusing at first, because it contains multiple entries for some items, such as Edit and Open. The key to distinguishing them is to look at the Extension column. When you right-click a .docx file in Explorer, the entry listed in ShellMenuView for .doc files is used, but if you right-click a .xlsx file, the entry for .xlsx files is used.

Right-click items in ShellMenuView and select Properties to see which program will open a particular file type. Right-click an item and select Disable to remove it from Explorer's right-click menus or select Enable to add it again. You should only disable items if they don't work, for example, because the software has been uninstalled.

DIY context menus

One final tool that's worth looking at is Right-click Context Menu Adder (bit.ly/rcma381), which lets you create right-click menu items that will run a program, go to a folder, open a web address in a browser or access any type of file. The tool downloads as a .rar file and you will need to use 7-zip (7-zip.org) to extract it from the archive.



Use ShellMenuView to enable or disable commands on the right-click menu

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



WINDOWS 10

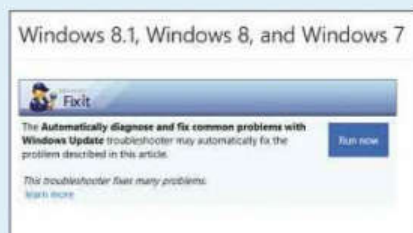
Windows won't upgrade to 10

Q I am intrigued by the pros and cons of installing Windows 10, but I found it hard to believe when I heard that someone had downloaded and installed it in 35 minutes.

I have a Lenovo Z580 running Windows 8.1. I received my reserve invite to Windows 10 but, after four attempts, I've still not managed to install it. Each time, it takes over an hour to download and preinstall. When the status bar gets near the finish line, it flatly refuses to go any further. I have run the troubleshooter, which claimed that the problems were fixed, but no – you guessed it – Windows 10 still won't install. I have tried having my anti-virus both enabled and disabled, but to no avail. It seems I'm stuck with Windows 8.1 until the laptop needs replacing.

David Eaglesham, via email

A It sounds like the installer is running into an error right at the end of the installation process. When this happens, it uninstalls Windows 10 and returns to 8.1. Try the following steps, which have solved the problem



Use Microsoft's own troubleshooting tools to fix Windows Update

for many people.

Open an Explorer window and go to This PC. Right-click the hard drive and select Properties, then Tools. Click Check to scan the drive for errors. Open a browser, go to the Microsoft 'Fix it' at bit.ly/reset381 and click 'Run now' next to the troubleshooter. Double-click the file in the Downloads folder and follow the instructions.

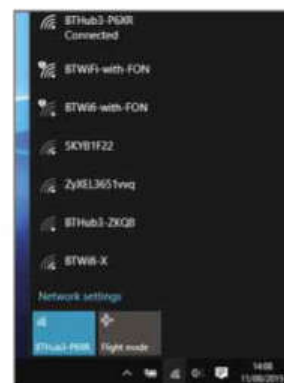
Press Windows+S to open the search panel and type `command prompt`. Right-click it in the search results and select 'Run as administrator'. Type `sfc /scannow` in the window and wait until it has finished. Then type `dism.exe /Online /Cleanup-image /Restorehealth` to perform more checks. Finally, uninstall any security software, such as your anti-virus software, restart Windows and run the Windows 10 installer.

Update to advise me before downloading and installing anything. I didn't request the Windows 10 upgrade, but the update history shows failed attempts to install it. Can you shed any light on why my broadband usage is so high?

Pam Woolgar, via email

A Your neighbours could connect to your Wi-Fi if it's not protected by a password. BT Home Hubs have a sharing capability and, in addition to your own Wi-Fi, it also creates BTWi-Fi-with-FON or BTWi-Fi-X networks. Anyone can access the internet through your router if they have a BT broadband account, including neighbours and passing strangers.

Mobile phones and tablets can use hundreds of megabytes each month, partly because their default settings are to auto-update. But even if you don't have other devices or people using your internet, a



Your BT Home Hub could be accessed by other BT subscribers

computer on its own can still use a lot of data. Online storage services, such as Google Drive, OneDrive and Dropbox, are continually syncing, and some software, such as Chrome, Firefox and anti-virus programs, automatically check for updates and download new versions.

If using a lot of internet data is a problem, perhaps because your account offers a fixed amount of data, you should examine all these possibilities and limit them where possible.

HARDWARE

Protect yourself against rogue PC repairs

Q I recently had my laptop serviced (cleaned and so on), and throughout

INTERNET

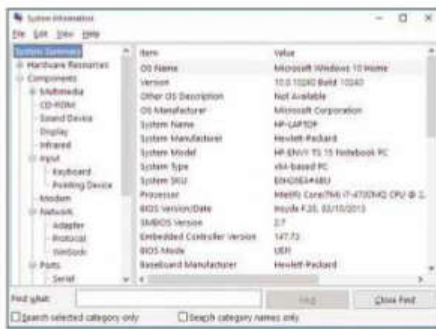
Keep tabs on your bandwidth

Q I have a Dell laptop running Windows 7, connected to a BT Home Hub 2 via an Ethernet cable. I send and receive about 10 emails a day, only use the internet a few days a week and run McAfee Total Protection. There are no other devices connected to the router, I don't use social media or streaming, and the laptop is not wireless-enabled. My average monthly broadband use is around 2 to 3GB.

I contacted BT on 5 August because I was experiencing some problems with my internet connection. BT confirmed a Home Hub fault and told me to change

the Ethernet cable to a different port. The problem returned later in the month. A new problem then arose over broadband usage. On 5 August, the broadband monitor showed 7.8GB used, which increased to 17.4GB by end of the month, even though I could only access the internet for less than half of August. So far, in September (four days at the time of writing) 3.9GB has been used. A replacement Home Hub 3 was installed on 27 August and the internet connection is now fine. But BT can't explain the high usage figures and are sending a new Home Hub 4, this time with new cables.

On 27 August I changed Microsoft



System Information shows exactly what's inside your computer

the three hours it took for the engineer to carry out the work, I sat with him because I was afraid that he might replace bits of my laptop and I'd never know about it. To save me from having to do the same thing next time, can you please point me to some software that records the address of each and every component of a laptop so, when the need arises, I can check to see if any part has been changed.

PinkyRanbo, via email

A There is a Windows tool that provides a fairly comprehensive list of all the components installed in a computer. Click Start (Windows 7) or click in the search box (Windows 10) and type **system information**, then press Enter. Click it in the search results. It provides an overview when it starts up, but expanding the Components section lets you browse each element, including the sound system, display, network and storage. Go to the File menu and select Export to save everything to the hard drive as a text file, or Print for a paper copy. Any time you want to check if anything has changed, just run it again and compare the old list to the new one.

GENERAL PC

A new computer with old Windows

Q I have a computer that runs Windows 7 and another, older one running XP. I want to get a new computer but would like to install both Windows 7 and XP on it because I have lots of 7- and XP-specific software that I want to continue using. Can I set this up so the computer asks which operating system to start when it boots up? I want to be able to exercise a choice at that point, such as 'Start 7' or 'Start XP'.

Barry Baker, via email

A There are some potential problems that might get in the way, but there are ways around them. If you buy a new

computer, it will most likely come with Windows 10 pre-installed. It is possible to set up dual-booting, which offers a choice of operating systems when you turn on the PC, but the way to do it is to install the oldest version of Windows first and the newest last. Installing XP on a Windows 10 PC could have disastrous results.

The best solution is to install VirtualBox (www.virtualbox.org) or



If you need an older version of Windows, try running it in VirtualBox

VMware Player (bit.ly/vm381), both of which are free, and to run XP and 7 as virtual machines. They run well in Windows 10 and, provided you're not using them to play the latest games, will work fine. You need full copies of Windows XP and 7 with registration codes, so you'll need to buy them separately, which will add to the cost of the new computer.

However, there is a way to get limited versions of the operating systems for free, if you don't mind a little extra hassle. Go to bit.ly/win381 where you can download all versions of Windows to run in a virtual machine. For example, select 'IE6 on XP' in the Virtual Machine list and VirtualBox in the platform list. Unzip the download and then use the Import option on VirtualBox's File menu.

The catch is that they expire after 90 days, but you can just reinstall them. You can then use these virtual machines to run your old software.

SECURITY

Does Edge have a virus?

Q On opening Microsoft Edge, I got a pop-up warning of malware and viruses. I couldn't close the browser and had to use Task Manager to get rid of it. I then discovered my Search App was not working, so I restarted my PC. On starting Edge, the same page opened and I again had to close it using Task Manager. Fortunately, I had created a system restore point earlier in the day for something I was uninstalling and this seems to have got rid of it – for now. What can I do to stop it coming back?

AI Love, via email

A You did not have a virus; it was a malicious web page designed to trick you into thinking that you do. A setting in Edge lets you continue browsing where you left off last time, so if you get stuck on a malicious web page, it reopens every time you start the browser.

You did the right thing to shut it down using Task Manager. For anyone who doesn't know this trick, you just right-click the taskbar and select Task Manager. On the Processes tab are several items labelled Microsoft Edge. Right-click them and select 'End task'. There is no way to reset Edge to its



Set Edge to start with your favourite search engine or website

default settings, so you have to go back to a previous system restore point. Type **system restore** into the search box on the taskbar and click 'Create a restore point'. Click System Restore and select the most recent restore point from when Edge was working properly. Start Edge, click the three dots to open the menu and select Settings. Set 'Open with' to 'New tab page' or 'A specific page or pages' and enter the address of the page you want to start with.

An alternative is to use Internet Explorer, which is on the Start menu, or download another browser, such as Firefox (bit.ly/firefox381) or Chrome (bit.ly/chrome381). The good thing about Internet Explorer is that if it ever has a problem, you can open Internet Options in the Control Panel, select the Advanced tab, and click the Restore Advanced Settings and Reset buttons.



This fortnight Roland has been spending time on Twitch (www.twitch.tv), trying to boost his gaming skills

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk



TOP TIP

WINDOWS 10

Mug winner



Skip through 'All apps' in the Start menu

I discovered something in Windows 10 today. Okay, I discover new things every day, but I thought I would share this one. The new Start menu has an 'All apps' link that displays a list of the programs on your PC. They are organised alphabetically with each letter as a title. I was scrolling down to get to the apps at the end, but found that if you click the letter or the 0-9 at the start, the alphabet is displayed in a grid and you can click a letter to go straight there. It saves a lot of scrolling.

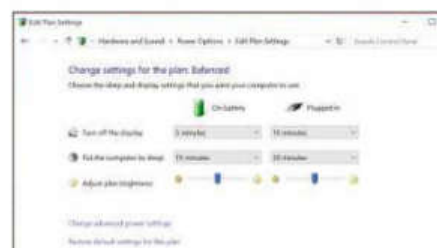
Rob Johnson, via email



Skip straight to apps further down the 'All apps' menu by clicking a heading

exactly the same problem on an old laptop that I have given my son to use for his homework. Unfortunately, updating the ATI driver didn't resolve it, but a bit of searching online helped me to discover that my problem was due to a clash between the driver and Windows' automatic brightness settings when switching from mains to battery power. Setting the brightness to the same level for both battery and mains in the Power settings of the Control Panel got rid of the error. Hopefully, it will do the same for Martin Bingle.

Dave McAlister, via email



Set the brightness to the same level on battery and mains to solve runtime errors

EMAIL

Change your Outlook view

Did you know that you can customise the display on Microsoft's Outlook.com webmail service? It's a feature that's easily missed. You can set it up like Gmail, with a links panel on the left and the inbox listing on the right; or you can split the right-hand side to add a preview pane at the bottom or the far right. My preference is to have three columns for folders, inbox and preview (actually, it's four if you count the advert). To change the layout, go to the gear icon and select Options. Click 'Reading pane' to see three settings for the message preview - Right, Bottom and Off.

There's another option that lets you open the first message automatically when the inbox or a folder is selected. It's



Customise the layout of Outlook and choose where to have the preview pane

best not to, because it is irritating if it's a junk message. Don't read it, just tick the selection box and delete it.

Ben Davies, via email

MOBILE

How to erase your phone

I've just replaced my phone, a Samsung Galaxy S4, which was very popular in its day but is now two and a half years old. That's a long time in the fast-paced mobile phone market. I wanted to erase the phone prior to sending it off to a recycling firm, but it must have taken me 10 minutes going round and round in the menus until I finally found the option I was looking for. Go to Settings, Accounts, 'Backup and reset', 'Factory data reset'. It took a few minutes to erase, then it was switched off and sent. I got £70 for it!

Dave Sweeney, via email

WINDOWS 10

Stop Windows 10 runtime error

In Issue 379 (bit.ly/webuser379), Roland Waddilove answered a reader's question regarding a Microsoft Visual C++ runtime error by suggesting that he should update his ATI graphics-card driver. I had

WINDOWS 10

Make Windows 10 feel like Windows 7

I have been reading all the letters in *Web User* about upgrading to Windows 10 and they've all had a negative slant, so I would like to redress the balance and share a tip that has made my Windows 10 experience a pleasurable one.



Removing Windows 10's built-in apps will declutter your Start menu



I downloaded the upgrade and installed it on my six-year-old Dell Studio 1555 laptop without any problems whatsoever. Everything worked perfectly, including my Canon printer. After using it for a few days, I did a clean install, which again was problem free. I have since got rid of all the installed apps by following the instructions provided by How-To Geek at bit.ly/uninstallapps381. Now I have got Windows 10 looking more like Windows 7, I am very pleased with it.

D.G.Cawton, via email

BROWSERS

Speed up Firefox

Recently, my Firefox browser has been running a bit slow, with some pages taking a while to load and sometimes even freezing. I couldn't work out why this was happening, especially considering I'm on fibre broadband, so I decided to give Firefox a tune-up. This can be done by opening the Firefox browser, then opening the menu, clicking the question mark and selecting Troubleshooting Information. Click the Refresh Firefox button. This removes all add-ons and restores the browser's settings to their original state. Since doing this, my browser is crash-free and super-quick, with pages loading at maximum speed.

If you want to customise the browser's toolbars to your liking, you can also try downloading the Classic Theme Restorer (bit.ly/classictheme381).

Anthony McNee, via email

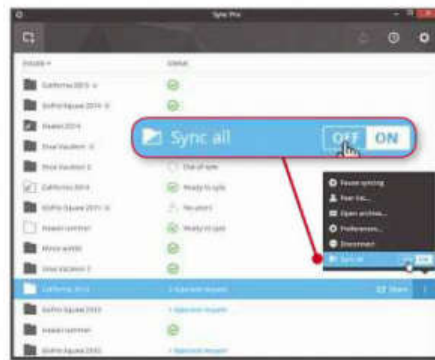


Reset Firefox to delete all add-ons and restore the browser to its original state

SOFTWARE

Sync files across devices

Many people avoid using BitTorrent because of its associations with illegal downloading. However, it's an excellent tool for transferring data, and BitTorrent Sync (www.getsync.com) can be used for syncing files between your own devices. The program is available on all platforms (Windows, OS X, Linux, Android and iOS) and, because it uses your local network to move the files, it's much faster than a cloud service. It's ideal for transferring very large files and you can also use it to keep the files on your mobile device backed up to your PC



BitTorrent Sync lets you transfer files between devices on the same network

or NAS (network attached storage).

A recent update to the free version of BitTorrent Sync lets you sync unlimited folders, so there's every reason to give it a shot.

Jack Gold, Web User Forums

iOS

Access Desktop files on iPhone

I was intrigued by your article on how to transfer files to and from different devices in Issue 376 (bit.ly/webuser376). When I was reading it, I was reminded of a service that I use called Pocket Drive (www.pocketdriveapp.com), which lets me transfer files instantly from any iOS device to Windows, and vice versa. It includes a music player, video player and document viewer, which is very helpful if you want to stream your own music on your iPhone rather than paying 99p to download tracks from the iTunes store. What's more, it's free!

Kai Collins, via email

BROWSERS

Choose how new Vivaldi tabs open

I sometimes use Vivaldi (vivaldi.com) to browse the web but it doesn't have a built-in option to open a link in a new tab next to the one you're using; instead, the new tab opens at the end of the row regardless of where it was opened from. There is, however, an extension called SimpleTabOrder (bit.ly/tabs381) that lets you change this. In the extension's options, you can choose where you would prefer new tabs to appear. I chose 'position right of current tab', which seems to be working fine so far.

Madeline, Web User Forums

E-READERS

Search Kindle dictionary

Every Kindle has a dictionary installed so that, when reading a book, you can long-press a word to check its definition. However, if you need to check a word that's not in the book you are reading, there's another way to access the

dictionary. Using the search tool, type the word you want to look up and the results will show any instances of the word in your books. By tapping 'search anywhere', you'll be given a direct link to the word in the dictionary. As a bonus, when you're online, you can also search for the word on Wikipedia.

FratPark, Web User Forums

WINDOWS 10

A quicker uninstall

How do you uninstall programs? The usual answer is to go to 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel, but there is another way – at least, there is in Windows 10. Go to the Start menu and click 'All apps'. Find the program you want to remove, then right-click it and select Uninstall. It's a lot quicker and easier than the old method.

S Jenkins, via email



Right-click programs in the Windows 10 Start menu to uninstall them

WINDOWS 10

Lock folders in Windows 10

If you've recently upgraded to Windows 10 and want a way to lock files and folders on your PC, you should try Lock-A-FoLdEr (bit.ly/lock381). It's a free, lightweight app that hides and password protects the folders you select, which is much more secure than simply using the Windows 'hide' function. The link above leads to a page that says that the project has been abandoned by its developer, but I found that it worked absolutely fine in Windows 10.

Tim Hurran, via email

BROWSERS

Restore Firefox's Properties option

I really liked the Firefox feature that used to let you right-click an image or other page element and click Properties to see its details, including size and file type. You can still see something similar by right-clicking the image and selecting 'View image info', but the Element Properties (bit.ly/elementproperties381) add-on will also restore the Properties button to its original position.

Ian, via email



Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!

HARDWARE

Why doesn't my printer recognise the driver?

Q I am trying to install the software for my Canon Pixma MG7150 printer. All goes well until it tries to register the driver. It comes up with the error message: "New port could not be created. 0023".

I have tried to discover what this code means but I am unable to find it even on the Canon website. Any help would be appreciated in getting the driver to register through a port.

albertinholland, Web User Forums

A I'm assuming from what you've said that you're using a USB connection rather than Wi-Fi. There are two options when installing drivers for printers, and I've tended to find that printers are extremely fussy about getting it right.

The two options are to plug in the printer, then install the driver; or to install the driver first and only plug in the printer when you're asked to do so. The correct method for your printer will depend on the way in which the port is set, so you should try both and see if it solves your problem.

Most often, people assemble everything, plug in the printer then insert the CD, only to encounter errors. The quick-start guide will tell you which order to do things in, but it's easily missed and online guides aren't particularly helpful on this point.

Try installing the correct driver first and then connecting the printer. You can find



Some printers require you to install the driver before you connect them to a PC

GENERAL PC

Can Windows 10 be installed against my will?

Q For the past few days, I've had the monthly 'Updates ready' message in my taskbar. When I clicked it, instead on the usual monthly list, I got a rectangular box inviting me to download the dreaded Windows 10.

I'm blissfully happy with Windows 7 and completely uninterested in 10 so I ignored it. However, it keeps appearing, daily, even though I've given it the thumbs-down. Is this going to prevent me from downloading the other monthly updates by somehow being bundled with them, or will the monthly updates be separate?

bobcat, Web User Forums

A If you haven't already got the upgrade and you download updates once per month, the upgrade



Windows 10 can't be installed on your PC without your permission

will most likely download with the other updates. However, it shouldn't install unless you manually launch it.

To put your mind at rest, before the actual upgrade starts, there is a lengthy preparation process which is supposed to include a 'Go Back' option as well as a prompt to enter a licence key, which you have to accept to continue. Click Decline and the upgrade process will not complete, and the installer should clean any temporary files left behind.

jak, Web User Forum

drivers and manuals for your printer on the Canon website at bit.ly/canon381.

izzit, Web User Forums

ANDROID

How can I free up space on my Android phone?

Q Can anyone recommend a good clean-up tool for Android? I'm planning to delete a few unused apps from my phone, and I want to totally remove them to regain space.

Rob1955, Web User Forums

A I have a Motorola mobile and a Hudl 2 tablet. Both are Android devices and I use a free app from the Play store called Droid Optimizer (bit.ly/droid381) to clean them up. It's a useful tool that lets you easily remove any apps you've downloaded yourself. It won't remove apps that were already installed on the Android device when you purchased it, though; you can only get rid of these by rooting your device and this is not the



Reclaim space on your Android device using Droid Optimizer

road to go down unless you feel confident enough not to mess it up for good.

I have found that Droid Optimizer will clean your phone and provide extra space, but you'll quickly fill it again if you use your device a lot. You can set the app to auto-clean your phone at a set time every day; this works well for me on both my devices.

fossewayfella, Web User Forums

Web User says: Droid Optimizer from Ashampoo is indeed an excellent clean-up tool for Android devices. We ran a Workshop about the app in Issue 369 (bit.ly/webuser369) of *Web User*.

Star Email

Mug
winner



Amazon doesn't deserve your harsh criticism

Although I agree with some of the sentiments you raised in your article 'Stop using these websites' in Issue 379 (bit.ly/webuser379), I feel the comments you made about Amazon were outrageous. The world of retail has moved on rapidly since the rise of internet shopping and Amazon should be praised for pushing the boundaries of what we now consider to be the norm. Comparing the site to the *Luftwaffe* is both ridiculous and offensive.

For years, we have paid over the odds for goods in the UK – something that has thankfully now been redressed by online retailers. Also, a lot of the products that are sold via Amazon are from small online retailers, which means they are helping to build and

run successful (and sometimes niche) businesses.

Amazon Prime is a great service and offers customers tremendous value for money. Who else provides unlimited movies, TV shows and now music for just £79 per year, as well as free delivery on orders over £20?

Amazon is not alone in its tax evasion techniques, but can you blame them? What company wouldn't want to maximise its



profits? It's for the UK government to crack down on and tighten these laws, and make sure that companies, however large or small, pay these fees.

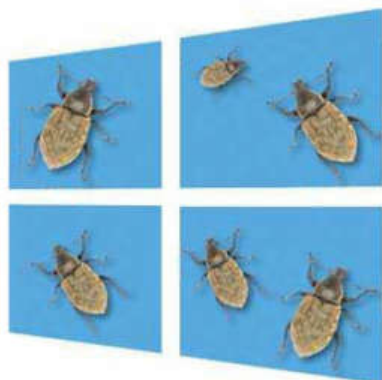
Having read your rant, I couldn't believe that at the end of the article you ended up praising Amazon, nor could you offer any other viable alternatives, of which there are many.

P Bailey, via email

The weevils of Windows 10

Is Microsoft the greatest thing since sliced bread? No! All I have had is weevils, mould and headaches. I'd had enough of Windows 8 so I upgraded to Windows 10, only to find that, after a while, my AVG box had disappeared. No "may we remove it?". I have asked Microsoft to send me a cheque for something I can't use, but have received no answer. I assume that I still have Windows Essentials, but I don't know because Microsoft didn't ask and didn't tell me.

Today, I thought maybe I should delete my browsing history, but as I tried to do so, I was advised that although I have Windows 10, it's an earlier version. What the hell is going on? I also notice that there are references to Windows 11. What's that all about? I am not a techie and I don't have enough life left to embark on a degree course in computers. Mind you, from the standard of the programmers, it seems that Microsoft might not, either.



Ask Microsoft a question and you just get a referral to the community, which means wasting more time that I don't have. Don't tell me I am the only one with these problems. Perhaps pen and paper is the new computer.

Alan Symonds, Facebook

More Windows 10 woes

On Monday 14 September, my internet went down. Well, the Wi-Fi still worked but, on my computer, Windows 10 could not find the server. I spent an hour on the phone with my internet provider, and we concluded that it was neither their fault or my router. I got in some expert help, at which point my keyboard suddenly stopped working. According to error 651, I either had a virus or missing files, so we performed a reset.

I then tried to download Kaspersky. I am very unhappy with them because they haven't even updated their software for Windows 10. I had to do another reset because my computer crashed and I

could not download Kaspersky again until I got rid of all the vestiges left from the last installation.

After the next reset, I began putting back the stuff I lost. Another crash. Then neither my keyboard nor my mouse worked. Two days later, there was a message when I switched on my PC: "There is a problem". You don't say!

I have now reset my PC again. I have sent back my Kaspersky 2015 for a refund and thrown away my paid-for recovery disc, which is not compatible with Windows 10. I will wait for the 2016 software because, hopefully, that should work.

Martin Fletcher, Thorpe Hesley

Why is Avast causing problems in Windows 10?

After buying myself a new laptop, I set it up and installed Windows 10. I then began to explore a bit, learning about the features of my laptop and the new Windows operating system. Everything was working fine, so I decided it was time to install some



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programs. I knew I needed to install some sort of anti-virus, and I remembered an old issue of *Web User* naming Avast Free Antivirus the best free security software. I went ahead and downloaded it, shut down my laptop and returned to it the next day.

First, I opened my browser. It wouldn't connect. I had a full five bars of Wi-Fi but it still wouldn't connect to the internet. Then, I noticed that my TouchPad had stopped working in random places, such as the 'minimise' button at the top of the program. Because the problems appeared unrelated, I got in contact with a technical assistant, who identified the problem as being – wait for it – Avast. Yes, Avast was causing all the problems, and as soon as I uninstalled it, everything worked properly. Why on earth did Avast feel the need to cause these problems?

Joshua Mawer, via email

We're being tracked wherever we go

I am writing in regard to the Windows 10 privacy concerns that form the basis of your cover feature in Issue 380 (bit.ly/webuser380). In my opinion, we are tracked so much today by things like CCTV, GPS and our smartphones that Windows 10 is just a small part of it. This invasion of your privacy is difficult, if not impossible, to stop;

imagine how hard it must be to avoid CCTV cameras when they are everywhere. Trying not to be tracked while using the internet is equally challenging and the only solution is probably to disconnect. We are tracked so much that I don't think we need to worry about Windows 10. Yes, it is a scary thought, but there is not much that we can do about it.

Dominik Kwolczak, via email

BT price rises have lost them this customer

Thank you for Barry Collins' Page 404 article in Issue 379 about BT Sport. A few days after reading it, I received an email from BT saying that they've just put their prices up again: "We're changing the price of your TV Entertainment pack and adding eight new channels. From

1 November 2015, the price of your TV Entertainment pack is going up by £2 a month – from £7.45 to £9.45."

As a result of this, I rang to cancel my TV Entertainment pack. BT tried to keep me by offering to not apply the price increase, but I said no. It is saving me £113 a year. Annoyingly, though, you lose



the so-called "free" BT Sport, which I just signed a 12-month contract to have.

I then got an email saying: "These services will also stop: Free-to-air HD, BT TV - Entertainment subscription and BT Sport pack". When I rang to query the loss of Free-to-air HD, they said I wouldn't lose my precious BBC HD channels, but I might lose one other HD channel (possibly!).

I don't like the direction BT is going in and will be leaving as soon as I can.

Chris Armstrong, via email

The rewards of sharing opinions with Google

Regarding Barry's column in Issue 380 bemoaning the Google Opinion Rewards app: I actually like it. The only problem is that the surveys, if you can even call them surveys, aren't frequent enough.

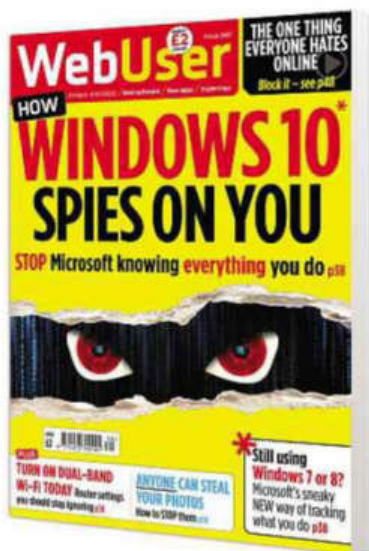
All the surveys I have completed lasted no more than a couple of clicks. The money adds up and although, admittedly, it's not a huge sum, it's given me enough to buy the full versions of some great apps including my favourite SMS app, Chomp; Ex-Dialer, to replace my default phone app; and two music apps including Shuttle+. Other apps haven't cost the Earth, either, and I even treated myself to TuneIn Radio Pro (bit.ly/tunein381), which usually costs £7.69.

The main reason I've bought these apps is to lose the adverts you get in the free versions, but also to give a little something back. By doing the Google Opinion Rewards surveys, I can always buy another small app when the money in my account reaches between £1 and £2. So, Google, keep the surveys coming, but more frequently, please!

John H Watson, Leeds

Blocking web adverts is stealing content

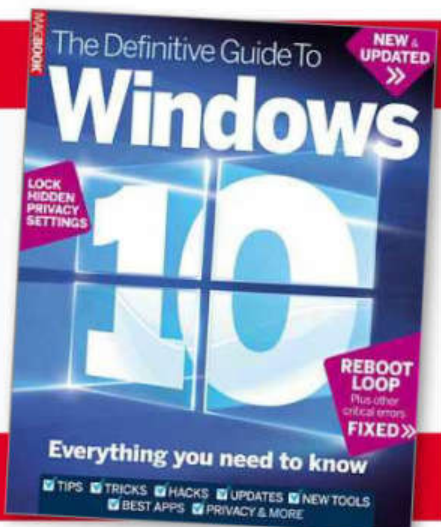
Why are people so surprised that Google is now preventing ad blockers from working on YouTube (Need to Know, Issue 380)? Google's whole business is funded by advertising so, if it keeps letting people use Adblock Plus and



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uBlock and the like, then it stands to lose a lot of money and, in turn, all the businesses that rely on Google's ad revenue will lose money, too.

Google has already removed ad blockers from the Chrome Web Store and Play Store (the ones that work, anyway, haha), so it was only a matter of time before it started disabling them on the websites it owns. Are people really so short of time that they can't spare five seconds to watch a short advert before a video, which is otherwise available for free?

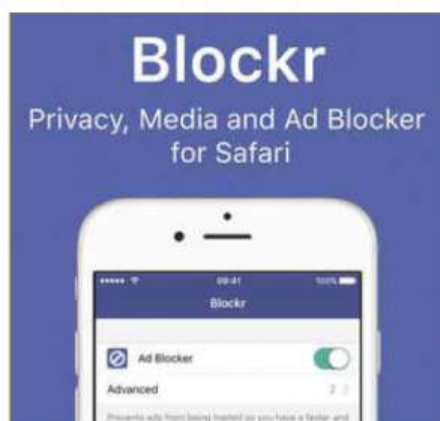
Basically, if you don't like adverts then you shouldn't use the web, because if you block them and still expect stuff for free, then you are stealing. Google knows this and, because Google is the most powerful force on the web, I reckon things are about to change.

Joel Ingram, via email

Hooray for iPhone ad blockers!

I'm so happy that because of the iOS 9 update, I can finally block adverts on my iPhone. They've been driving me mad for years: getting in the way of forms and news stories; blaring out at top volume and making me jump out of my skin; bombarding me with rubbish about deodorants and other women's products that I have zero interest in. Good riddance to ads, I say. I would personally recommend Blockr (bit.ly/blockr381), which costs 79p but works like a mutha with Safari. Go on, you owe it to yourself to use the web without being plagued by stupid, annoying ads.

Lewis Sutton, via email



What you say...

WILL YOU BUY APPLE'S NEW IPAD PRO?

If you give me £500, yes.

James @jamesonline

I'm sticking with my original iPad 2, simply for catch-up TV and the like. I will be getting another MacBook Air later in the year for the missus to work on. I will, however, be replacing our three Apple TVs to the new ones.

James McGinnis

Probably, as it looks like a good piece of tech. Maybe not right away, though.

Mary Fagan @mary_fagan

I'm firmly entrenched in the Android ecosystem, but wouldn't pay that much for a tablet. My Nexus 10 was a lot cheaper.

Dave McAlister @dpmcalister

CAN AMAZON MAKE A GOOD TABLET FOR JUST £50?

Yep. The value of things has never been based on production costs but on how much some twit will pay for it, hence Apple.

Richard Morgan

If it's Android and free of bloatware, then yes.

Jack @imthegoldmaster

No it'll be cheap tat, the same as all low-cost tablets.

Shawn Adams

ARE YOU PLEASED THAT FACEBOOK IS PLANNING TO ADD A 'DISLIKE' BUTTON?

I would show my reaction if the dislike button was already implemented.

Matt McCallion

It's name doesn't fit its purpose. Facebook needs a 'sad' or 'sympathy' button.

Rich Grove @Rich_Grove

Not really. It will just encourage negative behaviour. If I don't like something, I just scroll past it!

Lynn Sharpe

Why not have one? Most other sites do. Even the BBC, when it suits them.

Richard Bond

My joy knows no bounds. How about a sarcasm button?

Ethel Ethel @EthelEthel

How about a button to delete Facebook?!

Roger Whitcomb @milairpix

WHAT DO YOU USE WHEN SKYPE IS DOWN?

Hangouts (hangouts.google.com). It's a better app by far.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

A phone! We only use Skype to talk with my son's Nana and 99 per cent of time we give up and use the phone because the video quality is so poor.

Dave McAlister @dpmcalister

I discovered Facebook Messenger (<https://en-gb.messenger.com>) has a video-call option, so I use that to connect with my family.

Sandie Fisher

I tried using Skype months ago and couldn't get it to work. I now use Facebook Messenger, Hangouts, WhatsApp or just my plain old telephone to communicate with those far away.

Peter Fitzsimmons

I live abroad and use Skype every day, especially when I'm calling phones that are not online. Luckily, it's not a problem contacting people on mobile phones because apps such as WhatsApp and Viber (www.viber.com) exist.

Emanuele, Web User Forums

! Page 404



Try a clean install before you send hardware off to landfill, urges Barry Collins

Don't waste your gadgets, just wipe them

We now live in a society that's as disposable as a used tissue. Clinging to perfectly functional hardware until it breaks, instead of instantly replacing it when a new model comes out, now marks you out as something of a weirdo rather than a sensible, frugal type.

I've seen this transformation in my own family. When I was a kid, we had the same Sony telly for well over a decade. There was nothing wrong with it, so there was no need to replace it. Now, my dad's been through three sets in the past 10 years. At the first sign of a laptop or tablet starting to slow down, he's on the phone asking me to recommend a new one. We don't put up and make do, we ship out and move on.

The attitude has infected the younger members of Clan Collins, too. A couple of weeks ago I came downstairs to find my five-year-old daughter repeatedly tapping the screen of her mum's Android tablet. "It's crashed again," she sighed. "We need a new one."

Actually, we don't. We just need to sort out the one we've got. Android tablets are like Windows PCs: load them with enough apps and they eventually clog up and struggle like a Blairite trying to accept Jeremy Corbyn. My poor Nexus 7 must be

feeling the strain of the 40-odd games installed on it – almost all of which barged their way into Android's notifications menu so that they could try and sell my five-year-old a batch of tokens for \$50 a pop, as well as robbing the tablet of some much-needed memory.

With the tablet barely functioning under the weight of the dross, I performed a factory reset, clearing everything off and returning the tablet to the sprightly state it arrived in two years ago. A few Android updates later, and we had a perfectly usable tablet once more. It's not quite as nimble as

the day we bought it, because each new version of Android is a little more demanding, but it's not ready for landfill yet, either. A 15-minute clean-up was all

that was required to bring it back to life.

The same is true of PCs. Admittedly, a Windows reinstall will certainly take longer than a quarter of an

hour, but in my experience, it's generally worth the hassle and it will save you a few hundred quid. It's even easier on Windows 8 and 10, which let you 'refresh' your PC by uninstalling all the potentially troublesome software while retaining all your personal files. The whole process can be completed in as

little as 10 minutes and it leaves a file on your Desktop listing all the software applications that it's removed. Just make sure you've got discs, installers and serial numbers for all the apps you want to keep on your PC before you start the process, or you will end up volleying it into the wheelie bin.

I dread to think how much perfectly serviceable hardware ends up in landfill because people foolishly assume that their phone, tablet or PC has had it, when all it needs is a wipe. It's the hardware manufacturers who clean up when we can't be bothered to.

“ We don't put up and make do, we ship out and move on ”



Illustration: Andrew Torrens



Never miss that... “we’d love to work with you” call.

BT One Phone

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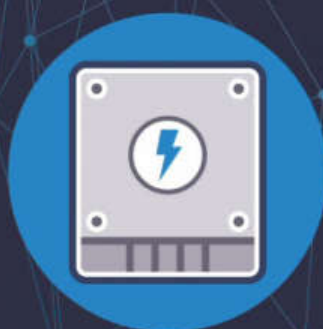


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